

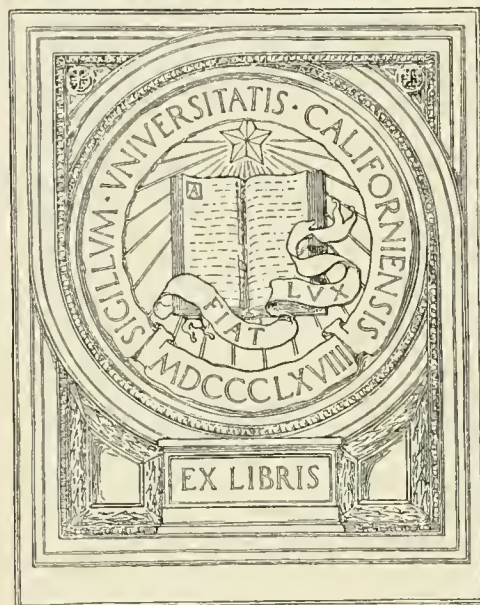
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THE POETRY OF THE CHINESE.

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THE POETRY OF THE CHINESE.

漢女詩解

POESEOS SINICÆ COMMENTARIUM.

THE POETRY OF THE CHINESE.

BY

SIR JOHN FRANCIS DAVIS, BART., K.C.B., D.C.L.

F.R.S., &c.

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INTRODUCTION.

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U. C. BERKELEY

WHEN this Treatise was first printed (now more than forty years ago), with types brought from China, in the quarto Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, the foreign character was so little known in England, that Lord Palmerston, with his usual pleasantry, said he took it "at first sight for a work on *Entomology*." But the number of Entomologists (in this peculiar sense) has so increased in the last half century, that the eye has become sufficiently familiar with a page of Chinese type; and a newspaper printed in modern Greek has been followed, in our cosmopolitan London, by the *Fei-Loong*, or "Flying Dragon," a Chinese advertiser, in the original character.

Sir James Macintosh, reviewing in the *Edinburgh* a translation of the Chinese Penal Code by Sir George Staunton, made some striking remarks on its "European good sense," which seems to apply more or less to all branches of Chinese literature. "There is nothing of the monstrous *verbiage* of most other Asiatic productions,—none of the superstitious delirium, the miserable incoherence, the tremendous non-sequiturs, and eternal repetitions of those oracular performances. . . . When we pass from the ravings of the Zendavesta or the Puranas to the tone of sense and business of this Chinese

collection, we seem to be passing from darkness to light—from the drivellings of dotage to the exercise of an improved understanding.” The late Lord Brougham, no incompetent judge, when dilating on the same subject, declared the following to be an “admirable precept” :—*Let a man only correct himself with the severity he displays to others, and excuse others with the indulgence he shows himself.*

Perhaps the poetry of no language contains a more natural expression of feeling and sentiment, or a style less *ampoulé*, than the Tea-picking Ballad at page 68. This appeared in the *Chinese Repository* long after the first printing of the present Treatise, and the contributor then remarked that it confirmed and illustrated what has been herein advanced on the subject. It must be observed, however, that the construction of the verse in the Ballad is of the simplest description, far less artificial than most of the examples which have been herein adduced—in fact, more suitable to the subject and the occasion, that of a young girl singing at her work on a Spring morning, and giving vent to her almost childish feelings in girlish and pleasing language. The intrinsic merits of the piece are considerable, and the English version by Mr. W. T. Mercer, of Oxford University, so well conveys the meaning and spirit of the original, that I have been glad to avail myself of it.

When Mr. John Gibson Lockhart was editor, in 1829, of the *Quarterly Review*, he found a copy of this Treatise in MS. lying on Mr. Murray’s table; and in one of our occasional

walks from Regent's Park, about three in the afternoon, to Albemarle Street, he proposed that I should adapt it as an article to the *Quarterly*. This was accordingly done, and it appeared (together with other remarks on the Drama and Romance) in Vol. 41, though, of course, without the original character. After the lapse of a generation and a half, and with the present considerable additions, the reader at this remote date can hardly complain,—*Δὲς κρᾶμβη θάνατος.*

The reproduction of the Essay, now long since out of print, and principally for the use of Chinese scholars, could not have been effected in the original character without the old type preserved in the archives of the Royal Asiatic Society, nor without the ample Chinese fount, and the able supervision of the Rev. Professor SUMMERS, of King's College, London, to whom, in the event of success, the author is bound to say, like Horace, “*Quòd placeo (si placeo) tuum est.*”

漢女詩解

POESEOS SINICÆ COMMENTARIIL.

ON THE POETRY OF THE CHINESE

“Quærere cæpit
Quid———utile ferrent :
Tentavit. quoque, rem si dignè vertere posset.”

HOR.

———o———

In the arrangement of our subject, it may perhaps be useful to preserve so much regard to method, as to treat of it separately, under the following two heads:—

Part I. Versification, or the particular rules which prevail in the mere construction of lines, couplets, and stanzas; and the sources whence these derive their melody and rhythm.

Part II. A general view of the style and spirit of Chinese poetry, the character of its imagery and sentiment, and the extent to which it seems to admit of a precise classification, relatively to the divisions and nomenclature adopted in European literature.

To such as should find the first portion of our treatise dry and technical in its details, the second may possibly prove more attractive: but the order of discussion could hardly be inverted with propriety.

PART I.

In Chinese versification, the following are the circumstances which seem chiefly to demand our notice:—1. The nature of the sounds of which

the spoken language consists, and the fitness of this for metrical composition. 2. The variation of certain tones, or accents, as prescribed by rule. 3. The use of poetical numbers or measure. 4. The observance of a regular cæsural pause, about the middle of each verse. 5. The use of terminal rhymes. 6. The rhythmical effect produced by the *parallelism* of couplets, which will be explained in its proper place.

1. Of the sounds of the spoken language. The attention of curious persons may perhaps be excited to ascertain what power of melody can be possessed by a system of speech, which has been represented to contain merely about four hundred *monosyllabic* sounds. They may naturally enough imagine, that Chinese poetry must, in point of euphony, rank with those defective verses censured by our own great poet :—

Where ten low words oft creep in one dull line.

Low words, of any length, are certainly out of place in poetry ; but that an English verse is much the worse for consisting of ten monosyllables, does not so clearly appear : and Pope's own poems abound in monosyllabic lines, as may be proved by the slightest examination. A few instances occur even of *couplets* so distinguished :—

“ Ah, if she lend not arms, as well as rules,
What can she more than tell us we are fools !”

“ Talk what you will of taste, my friend, you'll find
Two of a face, as soon as of a mind.”

“ There are who have not—and, thank heav'n, there are
Who, if they have not, think not worth their care.”

A summary disposal of the question, by assuming, at once, that it is a case in which melody is unattainable, has to be reconciled with the obvious fact, that the Chinese take a passionate delight in their poetry. Is it likely that so large a portion of the human race should have persisted in the enthusiastic cultivation of an art, which is essentially incapable of possessing that

very charm, which everywhere else forms a main element of its attractiveness?*

It has pretty generally gone abroad, that *all* the Chinese words are strictly monosyllabic—which only proves that opinions, which nobody is particularly concerned in correcting, will sometimes pass current for a surprising length of time.—Perhaps the circumstance of every word filling the same space in the page, has assisted to perpetuate the notion. It is the business of the present treatise, however, to state all that can fairly be said in favour of its subject; and, with the concurrent opinion of Dr. Morrison, we will endeavour to produce facts, and institute comparisons, which may tend to prove that a considerable portion of the Chinese words are not *absolutely* monosyllabic.

Some of these, if expressed by the powers of the English alphabet, are written *heâe*, *keûen*, *heûé*, *leâou*—every vowel being distinctly pronounced,—and others cannot be properly expressed, except with the direct use of the diæresis, as *lëen*, *t'hëen*, *këè*, &c. Now, with respect to the latter of these, if the necessity for using such a mark were not, of itself, sufficient to prove that they are something more than mere monosyllables, the metrical examples of another language might serve to settle the point:—

Their *flüid* bodies half dissolv'd in light —
Like some gaunt *lïon* in his gloomy lair.

Any person who has been in the habit of hearing the Chinese pronounce their own language, knows that *lëen*, *sëen*, &c., are quite as dissyllabic as *lion*, *fluid*, and such other words, wherein no consonant intervenes between the two syllables. Similar examples, however, are by no means so abundant in our harsh modern languages, especially those of Germanic extraction, as in Latin and Greek, where almost every line of poetry teems with such vowel sounds; and where (at least in the latter) we constantly meet with *three* successive vowels, forming as many separate syllables—the very circumstance which constitutes the ground of its superior melody.

* A writer of the “Mémoires sur les Chinois” asserts, that their poetry is susceptible of even imitative harmony, and this is no doubt true: but the instance which he adduces may perhaps make the reader smile. “On vante,” says he, “l’harmonie imitative d’Homère. Elle est très-familière à la poésie Chinoise: au lieu de dire, par exemple, on entend le bruit des tambours, le Chiking dit, ‘On entend le *tang-tang* des tambours.’ Cette citation n’est pas des plus heureuses, mais c’est la seule qui me vienne.”

But let it be objected, and let us admit for a moment (what in fact is not true), that in Chinese every word is pronounced *in the same time*, and therefore the above distinction signifies little. Does it, with reference to a sister art, make no difference in *music* whether two or three notes be struck in the same measured time—or only one? What, but something very similar to this, was the Greek and Roman practice, as far as we can understand it, of making two short syllables exactly equivalent to a long one, and pronouncing them in the same time. That such matters are not totally indifferent, might be proved by the trite example from Virgil—the well known verse, descriptive of an eager and restless horse, which derives its imitative character from the rapid succession of dactyls; and again, by the opposite artifice, used by the same poet in painting the blinded giant, where the heavy spondaic measure of the line, joined to the redundant terminal syllables, is equally expressive in another way. The discussion of this point, however, is rendered somewhat superfluous by the plain fact, that all Chinese words are *not* pronounced in the same time. Of what are called the “four tones,” it is the professed business of the *third* to prolong, and of the *fourth* to shorten them.

The truth seems to be, that the language of China abounds in diphthongal at least, if not in triphthongal sounds, which contribute, when found blended with others that are more strictly monosyllabic, to give to its verse a certain share of varied euphony. There is no occasion to incur the charge of attempting to prove too much: at the same time it does not seem very easy to shew, why such words as *keäë* and *keáou*, with every vowel clearly pronounced, should not advance nearly as good a claim to the title even of trisyllabic, as those marked in the following examples, each of them consisting of as many metrical *syllables* as it has letters:

Ἄτρείδῃ, νῦν ἔμμε παλιμπλαγχθέντας Ὀϊῶ—

ἮἸΕ σύν τε Μενoitιάδῃ, καὶ οὖς ἑταροῖσιν.

Not only, however, do *vowel*-sounds so extensively prevail in the language of which we treat, but the few *consonants* that are to be found in it are, almost without exception, free from the reproach of harshness. There is no

terminal consonant whatever, except *n* and its nasal *ng* ;* and the initials are only *Ch—F—G* hard—*H* (if it may be called a consonant)—*J*, soft as in French—*K—L—M—N—P—S—Sz—Sh—T—Th—Ts*—and *Tsz*. Of these, *Tsz*, and, if you please, *Ts*, are the only sounds which approach to the character of harshness. The Chinese find it no easy matter to pronounce English words; but Englishmen meet with little difficulty in pronouncing theirs—the natural inference from which is, that our own language, though certainly more varied, is the harsher of the two.

We shall presently see that they possess the usual means, employed by other nations, to give harmony and rhythmical effect to their verse: but it may not be unimportant first to show, that the native and original qualities of the language are such, as not to unsuit it altogether to the purposes of melodious composition,—that the raw material is not unfitted for the manufacture. A notion seems to have existed, that the whole merit of Chinese poetry lay in some curious and fanciful selection of the characters, with a reference to their component parts. As a medium for the communication of ideas, the written language certainly differs from alphabetic systems: but, after all, the characters are the *means* only, and not the *end*. The melody of the sound—the harmony of the structure—and the justness of the sentiment, or beauty of the imagery—constitute, as they do everywhere else, the merits of poetical composition.

2. Such being the natural qualifications of the Chinese language, considered in its *oral* capacity, for poetry—it derives cadence and modulation from the artificial use of the tones, or accents; which appear, however, to have been originally adopted for a very different purpose, and to have owed their existence, rather to the necessity of *perspicuity in speech*, than of *melody in verse*. It may easily be imagined, that where a whole spoken language consists of not more than about four hundred different sounds, hence there would be great danger of two interlocutors misunderstanding each other, from the unavoidable occurrence of the *équivoque*; and hence

*It must be kept in mind, that we here treat of the dialect of literature, and of educated persons. In the south of the empire, words end in *k* & *t*; but provincial corruptions and vulgarisms form no part of the subject.

the necessity for the tones, or accents, consisting of what may, in sufficient conformity with the meaning of their original names, be styled the *even* or *natural*, the *acute*, the *grave*, and the *short*. In point of fact, the first is no accent at all, but rather a negative quality—the absence of all marked intonation; and, accordingly, the Chinese themselves call it *p'ing*, ‘even or smooth,’ while the three others they class together, under the general name of *tsěě*, ‘deflected,’ that is, deflected from the *natural* tone. These last are, in regular poetical composition, used indifferently for each other; they are considered as being opposed to, and required in verse to be alternated with, the even-toned or unaccented words. It would be quite unprofitable to dwell here upon their minute distinctions, or to endeavour to give particular description of them, because nothing but the mouth of a native can illustrate them properly: they are really—*vox et præterea nihil*, and have already been as fully noticed, as such a subject admitted of, by several writers on Chinese grammar. Suffice it then to say, that by their use the original sounds of the language are varied or multiplied about fourfold, and a great accession made to its fitness for metrical composition. Of a species of technicality which admits so ill of illustration on paper, it is enough to observe, that the words (we shall presently see that these are equivalent to *feet* in other languages) which answer to the *even* numbers in each line,—the second, fourth, sixth, according to the length of the verse,—together with the last word of all,—are, in regular poetry, the subjects of attention with regard to the *alternate* position of the tones called “natural,” and “deflected.” The rule for placing them seems to have variety, or the avoiding of a too frequent recurrence of the same tone, for its principal object. Their attention to this point goes beyond the single lines, and extends to the couplets: for whatever the intonation of the second, fourth, or sixth words in the first line may be,—whether natural or deflected,—that of the corresponding words in the next line is required to be the opposite. M. Freret, in the “Mémoires de l’Académie,” fell into a great error, in asserting that “les Chinois n’ont jamais connu la versification cadencée par l’arrangement de ces tons musicaux: leur poésie a seulement été consacrée par le nombre

des syllabes, et dans la suite on a y ajouté la rime." Even the most irregular species of Chinese verse, called *Tsze*, is to a certain degree regulated by the tones, though in a different manner from the foregoing.

3. The next source of harmony that we have to notice, is the use of poetical numbers. Every word of Chinese poetry, instead of being regarded as a mere syllable, may more properly be considered as corresponding to a metrical foot in other languages. It has already been shown, that a considerable portion are dissyllabic—and all of them are pronounced, in the recital of verse, with an emphasis and prolongation of the voice, very different from the manner in which we slur over the unaccented portion of our syllables.

To begin with the smallest number of words that form a measured line in Chinese, we sometimes meet with so few as *three*, repeated like a kind of 'refrain' in popular songs. These songs are called 曲 *keo*, and below is an example of what we might call the *chorus*.

				清	長	枝
				風	楊	中
留	擲	景	光	吹	掃	水
上	黃	將	照	人	地	上
客	金	夕	衣	光	桃	春
				照	花	併
				衣	飛	歸

To the woods and streams the Spring returns,
 The long willow-twigs sweep the earth, the peach-blossoms fly :
 The clear breeze blows on man, the light shines on his vestments :

It shines on his vestments,
 Its brightness precedes the setting :
 Prepare the expenses of a feast,
 Detain our exalted guest !

The custom of the country, as almost universally throughout the world, reserves the principal meal, or *Cæna*, for the evening, when business is over and both mind and body are left free for enjoyment, and digestion ; for they agree with us, that

—“ He’s a most uncomfortable sinner
 Who only eats, but can’t digest, his dinner.”

This short measure also constitutes occasionally a species of chime for the inculcation of moral maxims ; and it was, no doubt, for the similar purpose of *assisting the memory*, that it has been adopted in the composition of the *San tsze king*, or “Trimetrical Classic”—a work evincing considerable ingenuity, though intended for the humble purpose of conveying to youth the rudiments of general knowledge. In China, as elsewhere, persons of high attainments occasionally think it worth their while to devote their talents to the promotion of the great business of education. The following lines are taken, as a specimen of this particular kind of verse, from that portion of the above work, in which the regular succession of all the dynasties, and most celebrated emperors, is turned into rhyme ; and it may perhaps remind the English reader of a well-known song, called the “Chapter of Kings :”—

TRIMETERS.

Kaou-tsoo hing — *Han nēē kēen*,
Che Heaou-ping — *Wang-mang tsuen* :
Kwang-woo hing — *Wei Tung-Han* ;
Sze pī nēen — *Chung yu Hēen* :
Wei, Shǔ, Woo — *Tseng Han ting*,
Haou San-Kwō — *Heih leang Tsin*.

號	魏	四	光	至	高
三	蜀	百	武	孝	祖
國	吳	年	興	平	興
迄	爭	終	為	王	漢
兩	漢	於	東	莽	業
晉	鼎	獻	漢	篡	建

“Kaou-tsoo arose—And the race of Hān was established,
 Until the reign of Heaou-ping—When Wang-mang usurped the empire :
 Kwang-woo arose—And established the Eastern family of Hān :
 After enduring four hundred years—The Hān ended with Hēen-tee :
 Wei, Shǔ, and Woo—Contended together for the empire of Hān,
 They were called the THREE NATIONS—And continued till the rise of the two
 dynasties Tsin.”

The line of *four* words is the shortest that seems ever to have been used in the higher species of composition. It constitutes the chief part of the measure of the sacred book of odes, called *Sheeking*, the oldest poetical work in China.* There, however, the measure of some pieces is altogether irregular, varying from three, to seven or eight words in a line. Poetry, in most countries, begins with being the vehicle of religion and morality, and the first record of historical facts. Venerated at first as the language of wisdom or inspiration, it is at length cultivated as a pleasurable art, and never fails to improve in harmony, however it may degenerate in other points with the progress of time. “Il faut distinguer dans la poésie,” says Racine,

* For two of the most regular odes of this collection, vide *infra*, Part II. The three hundred odes compiled by Confucius are divided into three parts. 1. *Foong*, Customs and ordinary affairs of life. 2. *Ia*, Government and morals. 3. *Soong*, Eulogies or commendations.

“ce qui vient de la *nature*, et ce qui est ajouté par l'*art*: la nature inspire d'abord la rapidité du style, et la hardiesse des figures; l'art vient ensuite, et pour rendre le style poétique encore plus rapide, et en même tems plus harmonieux, le resserre dans les bornes étroites de la versification. La poésie naissante n'a point du connoître cet esclavage, puisque les règles de l'art ne s'établissent qu'avec le tems et la réflexion.” The earliest Chinese poetry, as we find it in the *Sheeking*, appears certainly to have made use of the embellishments of both measure and rhyme, but with a degree of irregularity very different from the polish of modern versification. The lines are occasionally of all lengths; and the rhyme seems to be subject to little rule. It will occasionally occur for six or eight consecutive verses, and there will sometimes be none at all. For the same reason that Pope is more harmonious than Chancer or Donne, Boileau or Racine than Ronsard, Virgil or Tibullus than old Ennius:

—————“Sic horridus ille
Defluxit numerus”—————

so the poetry of China, from the T'āng dynasty (when this art attained its highest perfection) down to the present time, is, in point of *mere versification*, a vast improvement on the *Sheeking*. A writer of their own, in his preface to a collection of poems, compares its progress to the natural growth of a tree. The *Sheeking* he likens to the roots; when Soo-le flourished the buds opened: in the time of K'een-gan there were abundance of leaves: but in the T'āng dynasty many reposed under the shade of this tree, and there were rich supplies of flowers and fruit. It would be strange indeed, if this people were an exception to a rule so general; if an art, in which they took so much delight, had not improved by cultivation, or were, at the present day, devoid of so essential a qualification as the harmony of numbers. The old measure of four words, or feet, is now seldom adopted, being from its shortness unsusceptible of much melody. At the same time it does occasionally occur, chiefly for moral and didactic purposes; and the following may be taken as a specimen.—They are some lines of the Buddhists, or quietists:—

TETRAMETERS.

五	一	善	天	至	無	不	靈
體	雜	性	理	聖	思	擾	哉
摧	於	根	昭	至	無	不	一
傾	偽	成	著	明	慮	驚	點

Ling tsai yǐ tēn—Puh jaou, pǔ king;

Woo sz, woo lü—Che shing, che ming:

T'ēn le chaou choo—Shen sing ken ching:

Yǐ tsǎ yu wei—Woo tee tsuy king.

“When the heart is enlightened by a spark of the æthereal intelligence,
There is neither perturbation, nor alarm;
There is neither thought, nor anxiety:
But all is moral perfection, and the complete radiance of truth;
Where the heavenly principle pours its light,
The root of a virtuous disposition is perfected:
But once mingling with human frailty,
The whole man will be subdued and overturned.”

The improved system of versification consists in lines of *five* words or feet, as well as in the longer and still superior measure of *seven*. These now constitute what are properly called *Shee*, or regular poems, and we give an example of each in this place, though many others will appear in the sequel:—

PENTAMETERS.

回	流	山	僧	且	聊	追	父
首	連	觀	對	憇	尋	隨	客
晚	忘	不	空	倦	行	到	初
堂	日	改	饒	遊	樂	古	歸
鐘	暮	容	舌	踪	境	榕	里

*Kew kě tsoo kwei le,
 Chuy suy taou Koo-yoong ;
 Leaou tsin hing lǒ king,
 Tseay kee keuen yew tsoong.
 Seng tuy koong jaou shě ;
 Shan kwan pǐ kue yoong.
 Lew lēn wang jě moo,
 Hwuy show wan t'ang choong.*

“When my ancient guest first returns to our neighbourhood,
 I accompany him to the monastery Koo-yoong :
 We stroll along together, in search of pleasant walks,
 And then rest our weary footsteps within :
 The priests sit opposite, indulging their tongues in leisure talk,
 — We look at the distant hills, and remark the unchanging features of nature.
 Carried on by the stream of converse, we forget the day is closing,
 But at last, turning our heads homeward, we listen to the vesper bell.”

五峰如指翠相連
 撐起炎州半壁天
 夜盥銀河摘星斗
 朝探碧落弄雲烟
 雨餘玉笋空中現
 月出明珠掌上懸
 疑是巨靈伸一臂
 遙從海外數中原

HEPTAMETERS.

*Woo foong, ju che, tsuy seang lēn,
 Chang k'e Yen-chow, pwan pǐ t'ēn :
 Yay yu yin ho tsih sing tōw,
 Chaou tan pǐ lǒ, loong yun yen :*

Yü yü, joo seun koong choong hëen,
 Yuě chǔ, ming choo chung shang heuen :
 Ee she Kew-ling shin yǐ pǐ,
 Yaou tsoong hae wae soo Choong-yuen.

“See the five variegated peaks of yon mountain, connected like the fingers of the hand,
 And rising up from the south, as a wall midway to heaven :
 At night, it would pluck, from the inverted concave, the stars of the milky way ;
 During the day, it explores the zenith, and plays with the clouds :
 The rain has ceased—and the shining summits are apparent in the void expanse ;
 The moon is up—and looks like a bright pearl over the expanded palm :
 One might imagine that the Great Spirit had stretched forth an arm,
 From afar—from beyond the sea—and was numbering the Nations.*

The boldness of the imagery in the last example is somewhat striking, and the concluding two lines may perhaps serve to redeem it from the reproach of the bathos, to which the simile of the hand might otherwise have exposed it.

Verses containing the number of six, or eight, or more words, form no part of regular poetry in modern times ; though they are occasionally found alternated with others, in pieces which do not aspire to regularity of structure, but whose figurative style elevates them above the level of mere prose.—Lines of every length are used in those measured couplets, or sentences in pairs, so nicely balanced both in words and sense, which are adopted in the inculcation of ethieal precepts, and of which more will be said hereafter, under the head of *parallelism*.

In aid of the effect of metrical quantity, the Chinese possess another rule of versification, well known to Europeans, but which has never yet been noticed with reference to the subject of the present treatise. It may be premised, that no *sentential* pause ever occurs in the middle of a verse ; at least none which could be punctuated with anything beyond a comma in English. Every line is complete within itself: there is nothing of what the French call *enjambement*. But while a reference to written poetry easily establishes this point, the writer of the present observations thought he

* China was formerly divided into separate and independent states.

could plainly perceive, in the correct recital of the longer measures by natives, a very marked *cæsural* pause near the middle of the lines. Repeated trial tended to show, that in verses of *seven* words, the *cæsura* was invariably after the fourth—and in those of *five*, after the second word. With a view to being quite clear on this subject, reference was made to a gentleman, whose profound knowledge of the language renders him a very competent judge in all matters connected with it. He was soon persuaded of the existence of the fact; and a properly qualified native, being summoned into the room, was requested to read out the longer measures of verse in a low and deliberate manner. The result was, that the *cæsura* fell exactly in the places above-mentioned, being more strongly marked in some lines than in others, but still unchangeable with regard to *position*—and the native himself (who, by the way, was a *Sewtsae*, i. e. had taken his degree) admitted that such was the case. While the long measures admit of, and in some degree require, this pause of the voice, all lines which contain less than five words appear, by reason of their shortness, to be entirely devoid of it. The existence of the *cæsural* pause in a particular part of each verse might of itself, be considered as deserving of notice in a treatise of this nature; but the farther connection that it has with the structure of the verse makes it still more worthy of attention.

The language of China is in a great measure composed of what, for want of a better expression, we will call “compound terms,” consisting of two words or characters, which may be a noun with its adjective, a verb with its adverb, two nouns united—and a great many other grammatical combinations of the kind. These are always pronounced together,—as much so as parts of the same compound word in other languages. In a verse of *seven* words, the *cæsural* pause being after the *fourth*, the first section of the line generally * consists of two of these compound terms. The *fourth* and *fifth* characters can never be coupled in this manner, because the pause cannot take place in the middle of a compound term

* *Generally*, because it is not meant to be asserted that Chinese verses are *always*, or *entirely* composed of such terms: they frequently contain a number of single characters, or simple terms; but whenever the others are used, their position in the verse is invariably as above stated.

—but it must be the *first* and *second*, the *third* and *fourth*, which are thus related. This being the case with regard to the *first* section of the verse, the *last*, which contains three characters, is commonly a compound term, with the addition of a single word, which may either precede or come after it. But as this is a subject which may best be illustrated by examples, here follow some lines of *seven* words, in which the verbal construction can be observed—together with the places of the cæsural pause after the fourth word, as far as this may be shown without actual recital.

怎	不	美	名	偷	尋	何	世
得	是	玉	花	個	些	須	事
梅	一	不	不	閒	樂	苦	忙
花	番	磨	放	時	處	苦	忙
撲	寒	不	不	誦	酌	用	無
鼻	徹	生	生	首	杯	心	了
香	骨	光	芳	詩	酒	機	期

*She sze mang-mang—woo leau ke,
Ho seu koo-koo—yung sin ke:
Tsin seay lö choo—chö pei tsew,
Tow ko hëen she—soong show she.*

*Ming hwa pŭ fung—pŭ seng fāng,
Mei yu pŭ mo—pŭ seng kwāng;
Pŭ she yŭ fan—han chě kŭ,
Tseng tē mei hwa—pŭ pe heang.*

“ The affairs of the world are all hurry and trouble—without end ;
Why, then, with bitter anxiety—waste the heart's springs ?
Search for some pleasant spot—to pour out a cup of wine,
Steal a leisure hour—to sing the stanzas of an ode !”

“ The fine flower unblown—exhales no sweets,
 The fair gem unpolished—exhibits no radiance :
 Were it not that once—the cold penetrated its stem,
 How could the plum blossom—emit such fragrance ? ”

We next come to the line of *five* words, where the cæsura falls after the *second*. Here the first division of the verse usually constitutes one compound term ; and the last three words are subject to the same law as in the longer line. The following are examples :—

行	峰	看	山	廣	放	家	人
客	巒	山	色	之	之	國	人
不	隨	終	無	塞	充	賀	若
知	處	日	遠	乾	海	太	共
名	改	行	近	坤	宇	平	遵

Jin jin—jǒ koong tsun,
Kea kwǒ—ho t'ae ping :
Fang che—choong hae yu,
Kwang che—sìh k'een kwen.
Shan sǎ—woo yuen kin,
K'an shan—choong jě h'ing :
Foong lwan—suy choo kae,
H'ing kě—puh che ming.

“ The whole people—unitedly obeying the laws,
 The nation, as a family—will rejoice in peace :
 Promulge it—to the extremities of the ocean,
 Extend it—to the foundations of the world !
 “ The tints of the hills—are confounded in their distance,
 As the traveller views them—to the end of his daily journey :
 The shapes of their peaks and ridges—alter with every change of place,
 Until the wanderer—ceases to know their names.

Our English verse of ten syllables derives great advantage from the power of varying its effect, without any prejudice to its melody, by occasionally shifting the place of the cæsura,—unlike the Chinese, where it is fixed and immoveable. In this, however, the latter bears some resemblance to the French alexandrine, always divided into hemistiches by the cæsural pause, with which the sentential pause is most commonly coincident *—as well as to that law of the Latin hexameter, which seems to demand, that in a line *perfectly* euphonic, the cæsura should fall after the first syllable of the third foot ‡.

5. Of rhymes, it is chiefly to be observed, that they occur, in regular poetry, at the end of the alternate verses which answer to the even numbers,—that is, at the termination of every *second* verse. The first one of all frequently gives the rhyme to the whole stanza; but the rest of the uneven-numbered lines seem subject to no rule, and end with any sounds indifferently. The length of the stanza is determined by the recurrence of the same rhyme, and, in a poem of any continuity, it is generally of four lines only,—that is, a quatrain, whose second and fourth lines rhyme together; but occasionally it consists of eight verses, of which four have the same ending. Stanzas, however, or rather short pieces of poetry, are very common of twelve, and even sixteen lines, some of which might, with no great impropriety, be assimilated to what we call sonnets. In the stanza of four lines, it cannot be objected that the rhyme is too frequent; and even in that of eight, it should we considered, that only the second line of every couplet possesses the rhyme; while the intermediate ones are blank, and thus afford a relief to the ear. In our own Spenserian stanza, consisting of nine lines, no less than four of them have the same ending,—that is, the second, fourth, fifth, and seventh,—while three others like-

* “Que toujours dans vos vers—le sens coupant les mots,
Suspende l’hémistiche—en marque le repos.”
BOILEAU *Art Poët.*

‡ “Purpureus veluti—cūm flos, succisus aratro,
Languescit moriens—lassove papavera collo
Demisere caput—pluviâ eum forté gravantur.”

wise rhyme together,—the sixth, eight, and ninth. The Chinese, however, do not seem to have a very nice ear for the perception of true rhymes; and this inaccuracy may partly arise from their not possessing such precise symbols, or marks of sound, as our alphabetic letters. In the odes of the *Sheeking*, as the lines and stanzas are occasionally extremely irregular in their length and general structure—"numeri lege soluti"—so the rhymes appear to be under no strict regulation. This seeming neglect may partly result from a change of pronunciation: but there can be little doubt that the subjection of rhyme to more rigid laws was, as well as the other improvements in versification, introduced in the general advancement of the art, under the T'ang dynasty.

The following specimen affords an example of the rhymes in two stanzas of eight lines each:—

西	爲	萬	春	輕	漠	一	三
疇	向	物	風	輕	漠	雨	冬
事	農	發	搖	點	沉	正	晴
莫	人	生	蕩	石	山	相	暖
遲	說	時	日	池	閣	宜	久
行	柴	乘	隱	吾	物	桃	柳
坐	門	時	几	豈	猶	花	色
一	對	力	人	忘	憐	已	未
沉	滴	未	空	天	氣	滿	遮
吟	瀝	任	老	心	候	林	徑

STANZA I.

San-tung tsing-nwan kew
Yi-yü ching seang-ce :
Mo-mo chin shun kǒ,
King-king tēen shih-che :
Chun foong yaou tang jǐ,
Wan-wǔ fǎ-seng she :
Wei heang noong-jin shwǒ,
Se-chow sz mǒ che.

STANZA II.

Lew-sě wei chay king,
Taou-hwa ce nwan lin :
Wǔ yew lēen ke how,
Woo he wang tēen-sin :
Yin ke jin hoong-laou,
Shing-she lǐ wei jin :
Chai-mun tuy tǐ-lǐ,
Hing tso yǐ chin-yin.

Felicitous Rains.

1.

“The last month of winter was for the most part clear and mild,
 And now at length approach the well-timed showers :
 The wide-spread mist has involved yon mountain dwelling,
 Its dews are slowly filling each rocky hollow :
 The vernal winds obscure the clouded sun,
 It is the season for all things in nature to germinate :
 Let us convey an exhortation to the husbandman,
 That he delay not the business of his western fields.”

2.

“The green foliage of the willows has not yet shaded the path,
 But the peach-blossoms already cover the grove :
 Every inanimate thing seems to feel the influence of the season,
 Shall I, then, be unmindful of the purposes of heaven ?
 Like some who lean on their tables, and grow unprofitably old,
 Who exert not their strength in the proper time ?
 —The rain falls in drops before my rude door-way,
 As I stroll about, or sit, immersed in such meditations.”

Rhymes, however, are by no means confined to regular verse (of which it is our particular business at present to detail the laws), being very apparent in the following citation, a species of composition called *Tsze*, 辭, something between prose and poetry, in which the rhyme is repeated at the end of lines of indeterminate length. The passage is descriptive of a field or bed of chrysanthemums, flowers which the Chinese admire on account of the brilliancy of their colours, and which they display towards winter in large quantities about their houses :—

詩	目	秋	新	談	黃	英	黃	三	瘦
酒	只	情	病	到	色	飢	相	徑	影
陶	閨	性	厭	可	誰	可	映	深	滿
家	閨	漫	厭	憐	堪	飧	露	深	籬
興	須	言	開	嬾	並	風	下	淺	疎
	知	盡	出	如	正	有	集	淺	香

Sow-ying nwan le, soo-heang san king, shin-shin tsëen-tsëen hwang seang-ying; loo-hea tsǐ ying; ke k'o tsan foong; yew hwang sě, shuey kan ping: ching tan taou k'o-leen lae joo sin ping; yen-yen k'ae chǔ tsew tsing sing: man yen tsin mǒ chě hëen-hëen; seu che she tsew Taou-kea hing,

“ Their slender shadows fill the enclosure, and a scattered perfume pervades the flower-beds, planted in triple rows: their deeper and lighter tints reflect a yellow light, and the leaves shine varied from beneath the drops of dew: each hungry flowret inhales the passing breeze, as it sheds around its incomparable lustre. The gazer sympathizes with the languishing blossoms, bending their heads all faint and delicate: the mournful view awakes in his mind thoughts suitable to autumn. Say not that it is a sight to satiate the eyes of the indifferent beholder—know that such flowers as these once inspired the poet Taou-yuen-ming *, as he indulged his genius amidst verses and wine.”

6. The next feature in the construction of Chinese verse is perhaps the most interesting of all, as it presents a striking coincidence with what has been remarked of the poetry of another Asiatic nation. In the preliminary Dissertation on Hebrew Poetry, prefixed to his translation of Isaiah, Bishop Lowth has treated at some length of a peculiar property which he calls *parallelism*. What that is, will be best explained in his own words:—

“ The correspondence of one verse or line with another, I call parallelism.

* For some account of *Taou-yuen-ming*, see “ *Mémoires sur les Chinois*,” tom. iii.

—When a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it, in sense, or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction, these I call parallel lines; and the words or phrases, answering one to another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms.—Parallel lines may be reduced to three sorts: parallels *synonymous*, parallels *antithetic*, and parallels *synthetic*."

The *first* kind, Dr. Lowth defines to be those "which correspond one to another by expressing the same sense in different, but equivalent terms; when a proposition is delivered, and is immediately repeated, in the whole or in part, the expression being varied, but the sense entirely or nearly the same:"—

EXAMPLES.

Because I called, and ye refused;
I stretched out my hand, and no one regarded;
But ye have defeated all my counsel;
And would not incline to my reproof:
I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your fear cometh.

Bow thy heavens, O Jehovah, and descend;
Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke:
Dart forth thy lightnings, and scatter them;
Shoot out thine arrows, and consume them.

The reader is furnished below with examples from the Chinese, which will perhaps be considered as answering to the above description of the Hebrew—with this only difference, that the peculiar structure of the language, of which we now treat, generally renders the parallelism much more exact, and therefore much more striking and obvious—as it is usually *word for word*, the one written opposite to the other. The first two lines have a figurative reference to the perfection of a person's moral character:—

Pě pǐ, woo hea, ching che paou,
Tsing lēn, pǎ yen, fǎ k'e heang.
Sin taou lwan she, woo she choo,
Tsing tang koo tse, chě sz pei.

Mǒ hēn te tsě, yuen tīng seau,
Pǔ yuen kea pīn, hwǒ ke wei.

不	莫	情	心	青	白
怨	嫌	當	到	蓮	壁
家	地	苦	亂	不	無
貧	窄	際	時	染	瑕
活	園	只	無	發	呈
計	亭	思	是	奇	至
微	小	悲	處	香	寶

“The white stone, unfractured, ranks as most precious ;
 The blue lily, unblemished, emits the finest fragrance.”

“The heart, when it is harassed, finds no place of rest ;
 The mind, in the midst of bitterness, thinks only of grief.”

“Be not discontented, though your land be narrow, and your garden small ;
 Be not disturbed, though your family be poor, and your means contracted.”

The *second* kind of parallelism is the *antithetic*, “when,” according to the definition of Bishop Lowth, “two lines correspond with one another by an opposition of terms and sentiments.” He observes, with reference to his own subject, that “the degrees of antithesis are various, from an exact contraposition of word to word through the whole sentence, down to a general disparity, with something of a contrariety in the two propositions.” It may be remarked, with regard to the Chinese, that the antithesis is commonly perfect, both in sentiments and terms.

It is farther to be observed, that the learned prelate takes most of his examples, under this head, from the Proverbs of Solomon, “where they abound : for this form is peculiarly adapted to that kind of writing, to adages, aphorisms, and detached sentences :”—

EXAMPLES.

The memory of the just is a blessing ;
But the name of the wicked shall rot.
There is that scattereth, and still increaseth ;
And that is unreasonably sparing, yet groweth poor.

—As relates to the Chinese, the case is precisely the same, and no doubt for the same reason. In going over, by way of experiment, a collection of Maxims* compiled by himself, the writer of this immediately found that a very large portion answered to the foregoing description. For example :—

從 惡 如 崩	從 善 如 登	勿 以 善 小 而 不 爲	勿 以 惡 小 而 爲 之	濁 富 多 憂	清 貧 常 樂	思 多 血 氣 衰	慾 寡 精 神 爽
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Yō kwa, tsing shin shwang ;

Sz to, huě ke shwai.

Tsing pin chang lǒ ;

Chō foo to yew.

Wuh e gǒ seaou, urh wei che ;

Wuh e shen seaou, urh puh wei.

Tsoong shen joo teng ;

Tsoong gǒ joo peng.

“With few cravings of the heart, the health is flourishing ;
With many anxious thoughts, the constitution decays.”

* 8vo. London. 1823

"Unsnlled poverty is always happy ;
Impure wealth brings many sorrows."

"Consider not any vice as trivial, and *therefore* practice it :
Regard not any virtue as unimportant, and *therefore* neglect it."

"Prosecuting virtue, is like ascending a steep ;
Pursuing vice, like rushing down a precipice."

But the antithetic parallel is used not merely to give a force to aphorisms ; it appears occasionally, though perhaps somewhat less often, in the course of poetry ; and is found to exist in every degree, from the strong mutual opposition of *all* the corresponding words in a couplet, to that of only *some* of them :—

貧	富	低	仰	慾	心	信	觀
寒	貴	首	面	生	境	死	生
親	他	淚	空	還	靜	有	如
子	人	雙	長	是	時	期	客
離	聚	垂	嘆	病	身	安	豈
				生	亦	可	能
				時	靜	逃	久

Kwan seng joo kih, ke neng kew ;

Sin sze yew ke, gan ko taou.

Sin king tsing she, shin yě tsing ;

Yo seng hwan she ping seng she.

Yang mēen, koong chang tan,

Te show, luy shwang chuy ;

Foo kwei,—t'a jin tsü,

Pin han,—tsin tsz le.

"Look on life as an uncertain guest, that cannot remain ;
Believe that death is fixed, and cannot be escaped."

“When the region of the heart * is at rest, the body too enjoys ease ;
But the passions being excited, then disorders of the body arise.”

“Supinely gazing, now I vent my sighs,
Now bending down, in tears my sorrow flows ;
The wealthy alien claims connubial ties,
The needy kinsman no relation knows † !”

The *third* sort of parallel, noticed by Dr. Lowth, is what he denominates the *synthetic*, or constructive, where each word and line does not exactly answer to its fellow as either equivalent or opposite in sense : but where there is a marked correspondence and equality in the construction of the lines—“such as noun answering to noun, verb to verb, member to member, negative to negative, interrogative to interrogative :”—

EXAMPLES.

Is such then the fast which I choose ;
That a man should afflict his soul for a day ?
Is it, that he should bow down his head like a bulrush ;
And spread sackcloth and ashes for his couch ?
Shall this be called a fast,
And a day acceptable to Jehovah ?

This is by far the most common species of parallelism with the Chinese. Indeed the first two sorts, already described, are generally accompanied by this last—the correspondence of sense, whether it consists in equivalency or opposition, is almost always attended by correspondence of construction : the latter is often found without the former, while the converse seldom takes place. It pervades their poetry universally, forms its chief characteristic feature, and is the source of a great deal of its artificial beauty. In nearly every specimen produced in the course of this treatise, it may be observed to exist in a more or less marked degree, and unless for the sake of regularity, it would seem almost superfluous to adduce particular examples here. In the romance called *Haoukewchuen*, 好迷傳, or “The Fortunate Union,” the

* Morally speaking, and meaning the *mind*.

† The ‘Heir in Old Age,’ page 9.

first of the following two quatrains is introduced in application to the hero, who is distinguished at once by his bravery and his abilities: in the second example, it will be observed that the words are very nicely balanced:—

遇	得	五	百	才	膽	冷	孤
三	一	六	千	如	似	臉	行
杯	日	十	萬	李	子	驕	不
飲	閒	年	事	白	龍	人	畏
飲	閒	容	應	再	重	要	全
三	一	易	難	生	出	有	憑
杯	日	來	了	來	世	才	膽

*Koo hing pŭ wei, tseuen ping tan,
Leng lēn keaou jin, yaou yew tsai:
Tan, sz Tsz-loong choong chŭ she,
Tsae, joo Le-pě tsae seng lai.*

*Pě, tēn, wan sz, ying nan leaou,
Woo, lew, shě nēn, yoong e lai:
Tě yǐ jě hēn, hēn yǐ jě,
Yu san pei yin, yin san pei.*

“ Thus alone and dauntless he walks—all confident in his courage ;
Thus proud and reserved—he must needs possess high talents :
Courage—as if *Tsz-loong*, the hero, had re-appeared in the world ;
Talents—as though *Le-pě*, the poet, had again been born.”

“ A hundred—a thousand—ten thousand projects are hard to accomplish ;
Five times—six times—ten years very soon arrive :
When you have found a day to be idle—be idle for a day ;
When you have met with three cups to drink—then drink your three cups !”

The constructional parallelism of sentences extends to prose composition,

and is very frequent in what is called *wun-chang*, 文章, or 'fine writing,'—a measured prose, though not written line beside line, like poetry. Indeed all the three kinds may be met with occasionally in every description of writing that soars above the style of mere conversation or narrative. They do not *alone* constitute poetry, which must have the several other qualifications already mentioned, as measure, rhyme, &c.;—but being allied to art and embellishment, they claim verse as their proper province, and are carried there to a greater degree of refinement than elsewhere. The following three prose sentences, in which there is a parallelism throughout, combined with a sort of anti-climax, are introduced chiefly for the sake of noticing a striking coincidence of sentiment, in a quarter where one is not prepared to meet with it, except in the case of the most obvious, simple, and general truths :—

教	下	教	中	不	上
而	品	而	品	教	品
不	之	後	之	而	之
善	人	善	人	善	人

Shang pin che jin, pŭ keaou urh shen ;
Chung pin che jin, keaou urh how shen ;
Hea pin che jin, keaou urh pŭ shen.

The highest order of men (called *Shing*, perfect or inspired) are virtuous, or wise, independently of instruction :—the middle class of men (*Hëen*, good or moral) are so after instruction :—the lowest order (*Yu*, stupid or worthless) are vicious in spite of instruction."

These three classes are, strange to say, most exactly defined in four lines of the Works and Days of Hesiod *—the sentiment could scarcely be more nearly rendered :—

* Edit. Robinson : page 146.

Οὗτος μὲν ΠΑΝΑΡΙΣΤΟΣ, ὅς αὐτος πάντα νοήσῃ,
 ΕΞΘΛΟΣ δ' αὖ κἀκείνος, ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πιθῆται,
 'Ὅς δὲ κε μῆτ' αὐτος νοεῖ, μῆτ' ἄλλιν ακούων,
 Εὖ θυμῷ βαλλῆται, ὃδ' αὖτ' ΑΧΡΗΟΣ ἀνὴρ.

“He indeed is the BEST of all men, who of *himself* is wise in all things;
 Though he is GOOD, who follows a good instructor:
 But he who is neitherwise of himself, nor, in listening to another,
 Remains mindful of advice—this is the WORTHLESS man.”

Of the different sorts of parallelism it is perhaps needless to observe, that in no other language could they be carried to such a height as they are in Chinese: the exact equality in the number of words, which form each line of a poetical couplet, and the almost total absence of recurring particles that encumber our European languages, admit of their being adopted with peculiar effect. There is something of an antithetic parallel in the first two lines of Horace's well-known apologue:—

“ Rusticus urbanum murem mus paupere fertur
 Acepisse cavo, veterem vetus hospes amicum.”

But to make this resemble the arrangement of a Chinese couplet—to make the antithesis *sentential* as well as *verbal*—it would be necessary to set prosody at defiance, and write the corresponding words opposite to one another, somewhat in the following way:—

“ Rusticus mus, vetus hospes, acepisse fertur
 Urbanum murem, veterem amicum, cavo paupere.”*

Such refinements, though to some they may appear to savour of trifling, certainly contribute to heighten the peculiar rhythmus of the poetry into which they are introduced, at the same time that they tend to increase its difficulties, and enhance the merit of the composition, on the same principle that makes our neighbours the French so tenacious of rhyming tragedies, and the unities of the drama—“L'art en devient plus difficile, et les difficultés vaincues donnent en tout genre du plaisir et de la gloire.”

* It is evident that this transposition ruins the peculiar beauty of expression in the Latin, arising from the immediate contiguity of the antithetic, or corresponding words in the same line, which would be impracticable in the Chinese—a language entirely devoid of all inversion.

The Chinese are so fond of their parallelisms, that the most common decorations of rooms, halls, and temples, are ornamental labels hung opposite to each other, or side by side, and called *Tuy-lëen*, 對聯, which has precisely the meaning of the English term. These are sometimes inscribed on coloured paper, sometimes carved in wood, and distinguished by painting and gilding—but always in pairs. They have generally an allusion to the circumstances of the dwelling, or of the inhabitant: and, by way of illustration merely, we might imagine some Chinese, who affected a just mediocrity in his desires and wishes, suspending on one side of his study a sentence which should have the meaning of,

Caret obsoleti sordibus tecti,

and, exactly opposite to it, another sentence in as many words,

Caret invidendâ sobrius aulâ.

The first two of the following examples were supplied by the kindness of Dr. Morrison ‡: they were taken down by him, during our progress with

閒	赫	洞	練	梧	松
閒	赫	明	達	桐	栢
到底	有時	世故	人情	丹鳳	蒼龍
勝勞	還寂	即經	皆學	五雲	層漢
勞	寂	綸	問	邊	上

‡ In conversing with Dr. Morrison on this property of Chinese verse, and remarking that it was common to other languages, he suggested my adding to the present treatise a close comparison (like the one which I have here instituted) with the instances adduced by Bishop Lowth from the Hebrew. For the hint, therefore, I stand indebted to him.

the British embassy, in the interior of China. The last couplet I wrote down myself, on a visit to a native :—

*Soong-pě tsang Loong tseng han shang ;
Woo-tsung tan Foong woo yün pēn.*

*Lēen tǎ jīn-tsing kea heō-yun ;
Tung ming she-hoo tsēē king-lun.*

*Hě-hě yew she hwan shǔ-shǔ ;
Hēen-hēen taou te shing laou-laou.*

“ From the Pine forest, the azure dragon ascends to the milky way ;
From the Dryandra cordata, the crimson phoenix aspires to the borders of the
variegated clouds *.”

“ Experience and discernment of the human passions may both be called learning ;
Deep and clear insight into the ways of the world also constitute subtle genius ‡.”

“ Fame and ambition themselves must have their intervals of repose ;
Retirement and leisure are, after all, preferable to labour and anxiety.”

In a language so differently constituted from every other in the world, it is sufficiently surprising to find so many points in common as those already described ; but it is still more remarkable that they practise the somewhat refined amusement of what the French call *bouts-rimés*. A drawing on silk in the Chinese style, was sent to me in 1860 by the Colonel of the 3rd Buffs, engaged in the campaign against Peking, and I found on examination that it was an instance of this description. The Emperor had given to two or three of his favourite courtiers the *Yuen-yün* or “Original rhymes” which they were to fill up on a prescribed subject. This subject was the *Heang-shan*, or “Fragrant Hills,” being the inner and more secluded portion of the park of the Summer palace, burned down by our forces in just, though bloodless, retribution for the murder of English and French prisoners by the Emperor’s order. This turned out to be the birthplace of the Emperor himself, and the following account of it was given by an eye-witness: “Another collection of buildings, embosomed in trees, and girt round by a serpentine

* The dragon and phoenix are here typical of the prosperous man rising to high fame and honours.

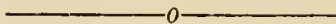
‡ Intended to show, that true scholarship and genius are not confined to the mere knowledge of letters.

wall, which ran up the face of the hills, took a turn over their tops, and again descended to the plain. This was called the Fragrant Hills, and formed the fourth or innermost park of the Emperor. The arrangement of these *Heang-shan* pleasure grounds was even more complete than that of the three before mentioned. The flights of stone steps leading from palace to palace, with the usual summer-houses, shady bowers, and delightful terraces, made the spot quite unique, and of a perfect loveliness all its own." A view of the place, as above described, forms the subject of the drawing on silk, which is inscribed with the *bouts-rimés*, as filled up and stamped in red with the Emperor's private seal.



ON THE POETRY OF THE CHINESE.

PART II.



Thus much having been said concerning mere versification, or what may be styled the outward form of Chinese poetry, we have next to consider the spirit that animates it,—and to ascertain, moreover, under what separate classes this department of their literature may be properly arranged, when viewed in relation to the divisions and nomenclature of European criticism.

It is here deemed necessary to premise, that such a mode of treating our subject is not adopted with the desire, or indeed with much prospect, of discovering any great correspondence or resemblance ; but the process of comparison, to whatever result it may lead, is always useful on such occasions. It serves to methodize and give clearness to our conceptions of a subject comparatively new, as the artist sometimes introduces into his sketch a few objects of known and determinate dimensions, to assist in conveying juster notions of what he represents besides. On this occasion, too, it has another and a peculiar use : for everything concerning China stands unfortunately so insulated and remote from whatever generally constitutes a source of interest to Englishmen, that the only effectual way of attracting attention to it, is by bringing it in contact with objects nearer home, and thus allowing it to derive, from association, its fair share of advantage.

Unless submitted with some degree of allowance to the touchstone of European taste, the poetry of China might possibly succeed but indifferently. The test, if it be not considerably applied, is not only an illiberal, but an absurd one ; and we have no right hastily to condemn the devotion which the ultra-Gangetic muse (however foreign to ourselves may be her features

and garb) inspires in her own native haunts; or to be surprised at the number of her exalted admirers, from Confucius down to Kiênlung,—considering that national taste is the most conventional and capricious thing in the world; that it is determined by the infinite varieties of national character, national models, and national associations; and that even with the same old copies to refer to, and with a general similarity of institutions and customs, the different nations of the great European community vary, on such points, not a little among themselves.

Scimus,—et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.

There seem to be two causes to which Chinese literature, of the lighter or ornamental kind, has owed its indifferent reception in the West—first, a want of choice and selection in the subjects—and, secondly, a considerable absence of taste and judgment in the mode of treating them. It is really too much to expect that people will trouble themselves to look at what is either stupid or good-for-nothing in itself, or so marred in the intermediate process as to have lost all the attraction that it possessed in the original state. Let us only place the Chinese in our own situation on such occasions, and imagine the dismay of some fastidious scholar who should unluckily stumble upon one of our street ballads, *done* into bad Chinese, that is, with a verbal adherence to the original. It would either prove a perfect enigma, which is supposing the most fortunate case,—or he would thank his stars that the broad ocean divided him from such savages, and burn a supernumerary stick of incense before the shrine of his deified patron. The interests and reputation of Chinese literature in Europe therefore seem to demand, that its professors take some pains to render its introduction as attractive as possible, by a careful selection of the best subjects, and by treating these in such a manner as shall interest the greatest number of tasteful and cultivated readers. To weary the attention with a mere list of barbariphonous and uncouth names, to produce some bald and miserably verbal translation, to present the mere *caput mortuum* of something that in its original shape possessed spirit and beauty, is in fact scaring away attention from a new

subject, which, with a little discretion, might be rendered sufficiently attractive even to *general* readers. With such considerations in view, we might look to the successful exploring of the Chinese mine, and to the extraction of the ore of genius and sense from the mass of baser matter in which it happened to be imbedded.

Whenever a work of taste meets with universal approval in its own country, we may be assured that its success is in great measure owing to the merits of its style and language ; and therefore it seems singularly injudicious to think of transferring the spirit and effect of such a Chinese composition into bad English, which it must inevitably become, by a servile adherence to the letter of the original. Between the greater number of European languages there is a certain connection, which allows literalness of rendering to be carried to a great extent—but a verbal translation from the one concerning which we now treat, must of necessity degenerate into a horrible jargon, which few persons would undergo the disgust of perusing. These observations do not apply in the same manner to works of scientific or doctrinal detail, as to those of mere *taste*, whose end and aim is to convey pleasure, as well as instruction,—though perhaps chiefly the first. A certain distinction, too, must be made between *prose* and *poetry* : the former doubtless both requires and admits of a closer rendering ; with regard to the latter, we may adopt the happy illustration used on a similar occasion : “Celui qui prétendrait juger de quelque POEME que ce fût dans une traduction littérale, pourrait aussi raisonnablement espérer de trouver, sur le revers d’une tapisserie, les figures qu’elle représente dans toute leur délicatesse et toute leur splendeur.” Verse, then, must be the shape into which Chinese, as well as all other poetry, ought to be converted, in order to do it mere justice ; though in the present treatise, where so many different pieces are introduced for such different purposes, it has been thought expedient to adopt by turns a *prose translation*, a faithful *metrical version*, or an *avowed paraphrase*, as might best suit the subject and the occasion. More has been deferred herein, than suited the writer’s own judgment and inclinations, to the prejudices of those who are still partial to the literal side of the question.

To take up our subject at its commencement—the earliest poetry of China, like that of all other nations, appears to have consisted in songs and odes, intended occasionally to be accompanied by music. Such is the nature of that curious compilation, made more than two thousand years since, by Confucius, and illustrative of a state of things certainly very different from that which exists at the present day. It is divided into four portions, of which the first, the largest, and most interesting, is called *Kwoh foong*, 國風 ‘the manners of different states,’—that is, of the states into which a portion of the present empire was then divided. These had all of them a kind of feudal dependence on one sovereign, who, in order to possess himself of the best means of estimating the character and sentiments of the various people more or less under his sway, was furnished with the songs and odes most popular among each of them. This agrees in a singular manner with the following remark of a writer in the *Spectator* *: “I have heard,” says he, “that a minister of state in the reign of Queen Elizabeth had all manner of books and ballads brought to him, of what kind soever, and took great notice how much they took with the people; upon which he would, and certainly might, very well judge of their present dispositions, and of the most proper way of applying them according to his own purposes.”

The bulk of these curious vestiges of antiquity in the *Sheeking* do not rise beyond the most primitive simplicity, and their style and language, without the minute commentary that accompanies them, would not be always intelligible at the present day. This commentary, however, explains and elucidates their meaning, and, by means of the historical associations which it serves to convey, renders these songs the favourite study of the better informed at the present remote period. Every well-educated Chinese has the most celebrated pieces by heart, and there are constant allusions to them in modern poetry and writings of all kinds. Each stanza frequently ends with a species of repetition, or ‘refrain,’ common to such compositions in general; and, in proof of the extreme simplicity of these primitive songs, one of them is presented below. In the paraphrase which follows, it has

* No. 502.

been necessary to embody the full sense of what is only hinted at in the original, and explained at length in the commentary; according to which commentary, the ode has a reference to the success of a rich and powerful suitor, who carries off the bride that had already been contracted to a humbler rival. The *kieu*, 鳩, or 'robber-bird,' is constantly alluded to in modern writing, as the emblem of unjust appropriation:—

之子于歸
維鵲有巢

百兩成之
維鳩盈之

之子于歸
維鵲有巢

百兩將之
維鳩方之

之子于歸
維鵲有巢

百兩御之
維鳩居之

- “ The nest yon winged artist builds,
The robber-bird shall tear away;
—So yields her hopes th'affianced maid,
Some wealthy lord's reluctant prey.
- “ The anxious bird prepares a home,
In which the spoiler soon shall dwell;
—Forth goes the weeping bride, constrain'd,
A hundred cars the triumph swell.
- “ Mourn for the tiny architect,
A stronger bird hath ta'en its nest;
—Mourn for the hapless, stolen bride,
How vain the pomp to soothe her breast!”

The second and third parts of the ancient book of odes, called respectively *Ta-ya* 大雅 and *Seaou-ya* 小雅, are said to have been composed for the purpose of being sung or recited on state occasions: they treat of the great and virtuous actions of heroes and sages, or express their sentiments. The following example, however, which is taken from the *Seaou-ya* 小雅, would seem rather to be of a more private description. It is explained as referring to the pain felt by the poet at the unworthy conduct of some ungrateful friend; and the allusions to the storm, &c., are of course figurative:—

忘	無	習	將	將	習	將	將	習
我	草	習	安	恐	習	安	恐	習
大	不	谷	將	將	谷	將	將	谷
德	死	風	樂	懼	風	樂	懼	風
思	無	維	棄	寘	維	女	維	維
我	木	山	予	予	風	轉	予	風
小	不	崔	于	于	及	棄	與	及
怨	萎	嵬	遺	懷	頽	予	女	雨

“ Now scarce is heard the zephyr's sigh
 To breathe along the narrow vale :
 Now sudden bursts the storm on high,
 In mingled rush of rain and hail.
 —While adverse fortune lowering frown'd
 Than our's no tie could closer be ;
 But lo ! when ease and joy were found,
 Spurn'd was I, ingrate—spurn'd by thee.

“ Now scarce is felt the fanning air
 Along the valley's sloping side ;
 Now winds arise, and light'nings glare,
 Pours the fell storm its dreadful tide !
 — While fears and troubles closely prest,
 By thee my love was gladly sought :
 But once again with quiet blest,
 Thou view'st me as a thing of nought !

“ The faithless calm shall shift again,
 Another gale the bleak hill rend,
 And every blade shall wither then,
 And every tree before it bend :
 — Then shalt thou wail thy lonesome lot,
 Then vainly seek the injur'd man,
 Whose virtues thou hadst all forgot,
 And only learn'd his faults to scan.”

✓ The fourth and last portion of the ancient poetical classic is called *Soong*, 頌—that is, eulogies or panegyrics on the ancestors of the dynasty Chow, then filling the throne, and on the great personages of antiquity. They appear to have been a species of hymn, sung before the emperor when he sacrificed as *pontifex maximus*, (which has always been the particular office of Chinese sovereigns,) in the temples of heaven and earth, or in the hall of his ancestors. Whatever may be the real character of the *Sheeking* on the score of poetical merit, it is at least curious, as having been *compiled* more than twenty centuries prior to our time, and some portions of it *composed* at a still earlier date. A pervading characteristic of the whole, as might be predicated of the early poetry of every country, is the boldness and frequency of the figures which are introduced.*

* One of the most striking examples appears as a quotation in Dr. Morrison's Dictionary, Part I. page 434 :—

“ The royal legions were numerous and imposing ;
 Swift, as if they flew upon wings ;
 Impetuous, as a torrent or a cataract ;
 Firm, as the base of a mountain ;

It may be laid down as a rule, that every species of composition will be studied and perfected in exact proportion to the estimation in which it is held, or the grandeur and interest of the occasions on which it is employed. When lyric compositions, like the odes of Pindar and the *Carmen Seculare* &c. of Horace, were displayed on great national and religious festivals,—or shone forth the subjects of public or imperial patronage,—they became objects to which the first geniuses of the age directed their efforts; and the perfection which they attained was commensurate with the esteem in which they were held. In modern China, if odes are expressly composed for great court ceremonials, we have not yet met with any. Such ceremonials are frequently accompanied by music, but that there are words to the music has not been so clearly ascertained.

There is a common species of composition called *Kō*, 歌 which cannot be better rendered than by 'Song,' or 'Rhapsody.' Its structure is as wild as the thoughts and imagery which it generally contains, the lines being of every length but distinguished by recurring rhymes at intervals. Here follows a specimen :—

人	散	怎	蔽	下	心	長	愁	情	萬
行	漫	暫	殘	不	事	空	交	看	里
冷	天	停	日	覺	淚	孤	併	雲	巡
雨	昏	怎	風	恨	如	雁	四	山	行
斜	冥	暫	搖	填	傾	添	邊	重	多
風	峨	停	影	膺	回	悲	落	疊	少
撲	嵎	只	匹	裊	望	更	葉	處	淒
面	山下	見	馬	裊	馬	題	響	似	涼
迎	少	黃	崎	旗	崑	起	秋	我	途
		埃	岐		坡	傷	磬	亂	路

"In my wanderings of a thousand leagues, how many mournful thoughts afflict me

Resistless, as the course of a river,
Forming an unbroken line, in matchless order;
Their motions inscrutable, their prowess invincible,
They proceeded to the conquest of the state *Seu*."

on the road—I behold yon cloudy mountains piled one upon another,—the emblems of my accumulated sorrows.—Around me the dropping leaves produce an autumnal sound—In the vast expanse, the solitary wild-fowl adds to my silent grief—I brood over my cares, and my tears descend—Looking back towards the base of *Matuy* Hill, an involuntary melancholy fills my breast—I see the waving banners intercept the setting sun—their shadows dancing in the breeze*—My horse has stopped at the precipitous turning.—Wherefore do we linger, wherefore do we linger?—There is nought but yellow sand drifting around—The sky is growing dark and gloomy—Few are the passengers at the foot of yon arched mountain :—the cold rain, urged by the gusty wind, is driving in my face.”

✓ Popular songs and ballads hold but a low rank in the literature of the country : and if we should even go so far as to include under this denomination the detached snatches of irregular verse (also called *Keoh* 曲) which are met with in their drama, the truth of the position would not be materially affected. The stage, and everything pertaining to it, enjoys a lower estimation than in any part of Europe : and we may take occasion to notice in this place, that the Chinese cannot strictly be said to possess *dramatic* poetry, in the sense which the term bears among ourselves, who apply it to the whole of a dramatic composition, and chiefly to tragedy. They make no distinction between tragedy and comedy in their stage pieces, the dialogue of which is composed in ordinary *prose* ; while the principal performer now and then chaunts fourth, in unison with music, a species of song or ‘vaudeville ;’ and the name of the tune or air is always inserted at the top of the passage to be sung. Here follow a few lines from the drama ‡ called “An Heir in Old

* This alludes to a tragical event in history, which occurred at the above-mentioned place. The emperor Yuen-tsoong (A. D. 702) had a mistress named Yangkuei, who was discovered carrying on an intrigue with a Tartar prince or noble, called Ganloshan. The emperor abstained from punishing the guilty female, which led to remonstrances on the part of his ministers ; but instead of attending to them, he complied with the request of Yangkuei, and gave the Tartar a military command within his dominions. No sooner had the latter reached his destination, than he set up the standard of rebellion, and the emperor, hastily assembling a large army, and accompanied by his favourite Yangkuei, proceeded to meet him in Szechuen. When they had reached the base of the mountain *Matuy*, the soldiers mutinied, declaring that Yangkuei was the occasion of the rebellion, and demanding that she should be put to death before they consented to meet the enemy. The emperor was obliged to comply, and ordered her to be strangled on the spot—but his subsequent grief for her fate was the cause of his own death.

‡ London, 1816. French version, Paris, 1819.

Age." The chief character in the piece, an old man who is anxious to obtain an heir before he dies, sets fire to his bonds of debt, hoping that such a sacrifice may induce the accomplishment of his wishes—and, when the papers are consumed, he breaks out thus:—

"Do'st ask me why, by this rash hand,
A treasure to the flames was given?
Why but t'avert, ere yet too late,
The vengeance of offended heaven !

"Full sixty years, by various arts,
For wealth I've toil'd, without an heir :
Who knows but heaven may yet relent,
And listen to a suppliant's prayer !"

While it is true that the Chinese themselves make no distinction between comedy and tragedy, a translator from their language is still at liberty to apply those terms, according to the serious and dignified, or comic and familiar character of the composition which he selects. The writer of this has therefore not scrupled to give the title of tragedy to a rather favourable specimen of the Chinese stage, which he lately put into an English dress. In the unity of the plot, the dignity of the personages, the grandeur and importance of the events, the strict award of what is called poetical justice, —nay, in the division into five principal portions or acts, it might satisfy the most fastidious and strait-laced of the old European critics. Love and war, too, constitute its whole action, and the language of the imperial lover is frequently passionate to a degree one is not prepared for in such a country as China. The nature of its civil institutions, and the degraded state of the female sex, might generally be pronounced unfavourable to the more elevated strains of the erotic muse. The bulk of the people, it might be thought, are too much straitened for the bare means of subsistence, through the pressing demands of an excessive population, to admit of their lounging about and singing after the most approved manner of idle shepherds and shepherdesses ; and the well-educated class, which comprehends almost all the higher ranks, or those in the employ of the government, too proud and unfeeling

to make love the theme of their compositions, which are doubtless *chiefly* confined to moral and speculative, or descriptive subjects. The Drama in question, however, if it served no better purpose, might teach us not to pronounce too dogmatically on such points by reasonings *a priori*, but to wait patiently for the fruits of actual research and experience.

✓ It has been observed in Part I. that the most flourishing era of modern poetry was under the T'ang dynasty. The most celebrated poet of that age was the renowned Letaepih, born in the province Szechuen, about A.D. 720. He is made to give the following account of himself in a play called "The Golden Token," which the writer of this once thought of putting into English, but abandoned as deficient in plot and incident. "When I was born," says the poet "my mother dreamed that the morning star shone upon her bosom, and hence called me, Taepih, 'surpassing brightness : ' when the emperor Yuentsoong commenced his reign, I was admitted to an audience in the imperial hall, and conversed of state affairs : the son of heaven conferred on me a repast, and helped me with his own hand." The poetical character in China has of old been associated with the liberal use of wine. So it has, ✓ apparently, everywhere else. The poetical brain has loved the stimulus of alcohol, or tobacco, or opium, from Anacreon down to Burns, Byron, and Coleridge.

Laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus,
Ennius ipse pater nunquam nisi potus ad arma
Prosiluit dicenda.

The inimitable humour of Byron is displayed in his account of the symposium with Sheridan, when the party was "first silent, then talky, then argumentative, then disputations, then unintelligible, then altogethery, then inarticulate, and then drunk." Next came the carrying Sheridan down the "d—d corkscrew stair-case, which had certainly been constructed before the discovery of fermented liquors, and to which no legs, however crooked, could possibly accommodate themselves." Letaepih's intemperate propensities occasioned, it is said, his banishment from court; but he remained uncured, and at last fell overboard from the boat in which he

was travelling, and was drowned. Any one who thought it worth while to know more concerning this person, and some of his cotemporaries, might find their lives (though without their poetry), given at some length by Father Amiot, in the fifth volume of the "Mémoires sur les Chinois." The following is not a bad sample of an Anacreontic, and may be freely rendered as below ;

不	相	年	日
用	歡	年	日
惜	在	春	人
花	尊	更	空
飛	酒	歸	老

Old age hastens on, as each fleet hour passes,
Though spring ev'ry year re-illuminates the glade :
So boys let's be jolly, and fill up our glasses,
Ah, why should we sigh for the flowers that fade !

A number of esteemed collections, called *T'angshee*, or "Poems of the T'ang Dynasty," are regarded, for the most part, as the compositions of Letaepeih, and a few more of the better poets of that day. They contain many favourable specimens, evincing both taste and imagination, and the following passage may be considered as tolerable. A person fishing in a boat, upon a lake, is supposed to have been led, by the track of peach blossoms floating on the water, into a narrow creek, which he pursued to a distance, until he reached a place inhabited by beings who, from the primitive simplicity of their manners, seemed to have escaped, in that secluded retreat, the persecution of the celebrated tyrant Tsinchehwang, 秦始皇 and to have had no communication with the rest of the world since. On his return from this little Chinese paradise, the adventurous boatman related

what he had seen,—or perchance only dreamed ; but on attempting to find the place again, it had vanished. There is a neat allusion to the famous burning of the books by the tyrant's command :—

十	若	犬	鷄	子	草	風	炊
年	使	吠	鳴	孫	木	景	烟
余	扁	紅	白	常	盡	依	落
欲	舟	雲	日	讀	生	稀	落
效	能	出	來	未	無	太	少
為	再	草	溪	燒	稅	古	人
漁	返	廬	洞	書	地	餘	居

The Inlet of Peach Blossoms.

Few were th' inhabitants of that fair dell,—
 Remnants their manners were of other days,—
 Flourish'd their fields in peace,—no impost fell
 Midway check'd labour's fruitful course,—the lays
 Their children sung had 'scaped the *general blaze* :
 Adown the vale was heard the cock's shrill strain ;
 The watch-dog's voice welcom'd the morning rays ;
 Oh, could my bark those happy fields regain,
 Long years of toil I'd brave—nor deem my labours vain !

The following specimen is from the same collection with the preceding. The value of timely showers, to which it alludes, can only be duly felt in a hot climate and a thirsty soil like the south of China, where, according to the common saying, "Three days make a short drought—five days a long one :"—

花	曉	江	野	潤	隨	當	好
重	看	船	徑	物	風	春	雨
錦	紅	火	雲	細	潛	乃	知
官	濕	獨	俱	無	入	發	時
城	處	明	黑	聲	夜	生	節

An Evening Shower in Spring.

See how the gently falling rain
Its vernal influence sweetly showers,
As through the calm and tepid eve
It silently bedews the flowers.

Cloudy and dark th' horizon spreads,
Save where some boat its light is burning :
But soon the landscape's tints shall glow
All radiant, with the morn returning.

There exist abundant materials of poetry in what may be called the heroic ages of China, when she was divided into independent states, contending against each other for sovereignty. The following lines are supposed to have been written by a certain emperor to his victorious general, of whose successes in the south he had just heard. The third and fourth lines are transposed in our version :—

The South subdued.

Servant, well done—the erring south restor'd,
Bends to the prowess of thy glittering sword ;
High as the orbs thy light'ning standard gleams,
Thy drum's loud music shakes the mountain streams,
And heaven's own race alights on earth again,
The foe to scatter to their murky den !
Know, when with pride thy glad return we hail,
Thy sovereign's hand shall loose his hero's mail !

朕	太	穴	天	電	風	腰	大
與	平	中	上	閃	吹	橫	將
先	待	螻	麒	旌	鼉	秋	南
生	詔	蟻	麟	旗	鼓	水	征
解	歸	豈	原	日	山	雁	胆
戰	來	能	有	月	河	翎	氣
袍	日	逃	種	高	動	刀	豪

No composition, however, to which the name of Epic could properly be applied, has ever rewarded European research. Though poetry exists in some shape or other all over the world, the same universality hardly attaches to that modification of it, which we style the Epopee; and, but for the two great prototypes of Homer, there seems to be no absolute necessity for supposing that it must have arisen, or at least been so frequent, in our western literature. It was confessedly in imitation of Homer that Virgil wrote, and all subsequent epics have been more or less, in conception at least, if not in execution, imitations of these two, or of each other. Voltaire himself has informed us, that when he consulted the advice of a friend previous to composing his own *Henriade*, he met with no better encouragement than this: "You undertake a work which is not suited to us—les Français n'ont pas la tête épique."—But without going farther for reasons, the first part of this treatise may perhaps have served to demonstrate, that the turn and construction of Chinese verse unfits it for such sustained compositions. To be esteemed good, it must be so highly elaborated, that the costliness of the material may place limits to the size of the structure. It would be a tremendous attempt to preserve such nicely-balanced couplets through the slow length of an epic poem; not to mention, that when the task had been

completed, it might weary the reader as much as it had disquieted the author, and bestow upon the first all the sleep of which it had deprived the second. The only long metrical narrations of the Chinese are some novels and licentious * pieces, in which the structure of the verse is altogether loose—a sort of “stans pede in uno” measure—and devoid of those characteristics which constitute the chief merit of their poetry. Such compositions, accordingly, do not possess that degree of estimation, nor hold that rank in literature which, as we have before observed, is necessary to the due perfection of every department of the art. †

There is another description of poetry which we should not look for in China,—namely, the Pastoral,—and for every obvious reasons. It has not only been the care of the government, from the earliest ages, to give every direct encouragement to agriculture, and to the production of food for man alone, but there have always existed some absurd prejudices and maxims, not to say positive laws, against an extended consumption of flesh food. ‡ The penal code denounces severe punishments against those who kill *their own* cattle without an express license. § It is a well known principle, that where tillage exists to a considerable extent, the rent of land reserved for pasture must, in proportion to its goodness, be equal to that of land employed in producing grain; and this, under a rice cultivation, where three crops per annum are said sometimes to be obtained, must have such an obvious effect in raising the comparative price of meat, as must necessarily discourage its consumption among so frugal a people as the Chinese, even without the intervention of any positive law. There is accordingly no people in the

* There never was any assertion more incorrect than this of Martinius, concerning the lighter poetry of China: “Insunt iis quædam de amando, sed castitatem magis quam nostrorum poetarum mollitiem spirantia, magna decori ubique cura.”—In translating the excellent prose romance of “The Fortunate Union,” otherwise unexceptionable, the writer of this was obliged to exclude two passages in verse, which were distinguished—“*minimâ decori curâ.*” There are whole poems of the same description.

† Those half-mechanical conceits, of which the principal merit consists in the imitation, in tortured verses, of some object in art or nature, as a knot, a circle, a sceptre, &c., are well known to the Chinese: but sound taste and criticism have universally consigned these *difficiles nugæ* to a very low rank in literature, and we therefore abandon them without further notice.

‡ See a long paper, “Sur l’usage de la viande en Chine.” *Mémoires*, tom. xi.

§ Book iv., sect. 233.

world (the Hindoos * always excepted), that consumes so little meat, or so much fish and vegetable food—nor, again, is there any country in which fewer cattle are employed for the purpose of draft and burden. Where every institution tends so fatally to keep a population up to the very utmost limits of a bare subsistence, and where neither pride nor prejudice steps in between the labourer and his work, human exertion naturally supplants every other. In the southern parts of the empire, therefore, beasts of carriage and draft, with the exception of a few miserable riding horses, and a few buffaloes for ploughing, are nearly unknown. Towards Peking, and the uncultivated borders of Tartary, the case becomes altered: but the Great Wall may still be considered, generally, as the boundary which separates two people, one of them exclusively pastoral, and the other as exclusively tillers of the earth.

The esteem in which the business of tillage is held, may be expected to have rendered it the subject of poetical celebration: and we find the praises of fertile fields sung in such strains as the following. Years of dearth they term “years of nothingness:”—

Fields that know no Years of Dearth.

Though man's superfluous labour ceas'd to till
 The fertile glebe, ne'er would its bounties end:
 Though rusting lay the abandon'd ploughshare—still
 O'er the fair land would waving harvests bend!

Less happy soils may pine in years of dearth—
Late though we sow, we *early* reap the field;
 A thousand roods of richly-teemed earth,
 In verdant crops ten thousand measures yield!

Why haunt we then, the sylvans mossy shrine—
 Why ask what harvest shall our toils attend?
 See the sweet spring with surer presage shine,
 And balmy airs, and length'ning days descend!

* Bishop Heber's Journal proves that the Hindoos themselves are not so scrupulous as they have been supposed. They consume milk, too, which the Chinese, strange to say, never think of.

况	何	無	無	不	人
值	須	無	年	任	工
春	祭	盈	皆	耕	雖
臺	田	千	有	耘	未
啟	祖	畝	獲	早	及
和	詎	菁	後	偏	地
風	要	菁	種	宜	力
日	察	保	亦	黍	信
又	農	萬	先	稷	非
長	祥	箱	芳	良	常

We have next to notice a large class of poetry, which may be properly styled Moral or Didactic. The long citation from the philosopher Kwan-foo tsze 關夫子, given by Dr. Morrison at p. 147 of the Third Part of his Dictionary, comes under this head. It commences thus:—

“Venerate heaven and earth; perform the rites to the gods,
Worship your ancestors: be dutiful to your parents:
Observe the laws: revere your teachers and superiors,
Love your brothers: and be true to your friends, &c.”

The whole piece bears some resemblance to the Golden verses of Pythagoras, particularly in the commencement, which may be thus literally rendered:—

“ First, as the laws ordain, th’ immortal gods
 Worship : observe your vows : the great of yore
 Next, and the manes of the dead revere :
 Honour your parents, and your next of kin, &c.”

There are innumerable poems, or rather metrical essays, whose object it is to convey the doctrines and precepts of the great national sages and others. The whole of the well-known work called *Shing yu*, 聖諭 Instructions addressed to the People by the second Emperor of the present Tartar Family, has been cast into a short, rhyming verse. The example, given in Part I. at page 11, comes likewise under this head ; as do all the similar productions of the Buddhists, and other sects. We must consider these as forming a portion of the national literature in the gross, although they have nothing to do with Confucius or his doctrines, and are commonly held by the privileged learned in as great contempt as the superstitions to which they pertain.

In the course of their lighter works, Chinese writers frequently introduce moral reflections in verse with very good effect. A couplet, a quatrain, or a passage of eight or more lines, agreeably engages the reader's attention in his progress through a romance or novel, and generally accompanies the transition to some other part of the story. They are not altogether unlike the rhymes at the close of the scenes in our older plays, and usually consist, as those did, of some reflection upon what has gone before, or what is immediately to follow ; though in a narrative they certainly find a more proper place than in the drama, and are not there subject to the reproach of bad taste, which has very properly excluded such passages from our own modern stage pieces. Here follow examples from “ The Fortunate Union : ” —

大	若	直	模	上	勸	誰	奸
都	問	至	糊	有	君	知	狡
假	老	交	世	蒼	不	敗	休
此	天	情	事	蒼	必	露	誇
煉	顛	久	倏	日	遮	出	用
人	倒	自	多	鑒	人	無	智
心	意	深	變	臨	目	心	深

“Vain are the crafty villain’s wiles, most vain,
Often, when vaunted most—disgrace, defeat,
Rush headlong in from quarters little feared!
Harken to counsel, friend, and when secure
You deem yourself from mortals’ purblind eyes,
Think there’s a heaven above, that surveys all!

“Human events in quick vicissitude
Succeed each other: but true friendship’s ties
Gain strength from time! Ask ye why sovereign heav’n
Thus vexes mortals?—’Tis to try their hearts
Like metal in the fiery crucible.”

Satire, viewed as a means of recommending virtue by discrediting vice, cannot be said to exist in any regular form, or to constitute a particular branch of literature. Some of the ancient pieces in the *Sheeking* have been considered as levelled at persons existing when they were composed; but they have no more claim on this account to the name of satires, than Horace’s ode “In Mævium.” There is no country, at the same time, in which anonymous lampoons, and similar vehicles of invective or ridicule, are more common. They form one of the most ordinary outlets for the

ebullitions of public feeling : and must be considered, by every person who has had opportunities of making the observation, as a very important check, under so absolute a despotism, upon the conduct of Chinese rulers. The highest officers of government are not exempt from these covert attacks, which are constantly made, notwithstanding the severest punishments in case of detection :—

———“ I will ease my heart,
Although it be with hazard of my head.”

The following are specimens of satirical passages introduced in the course of a novel, to ridicule the worthless characters, both male and female :—

嚇	閻	朱	珠	痛	若	誰	只
殺	王	屑	面	削	非	知	道
劉	見	海	金	如	天	轉	諛
郎	慣	濶	髮	何	賦	變	言
與	渾	額	宮	當	老	做	人
阮	閤	山	樣	得	面	羞	所
郎	事	長	粧	起	皮	耻	喜

“ He thought his flattering phrases needs must prove
Welcome — nor dream'd of foul repulse and shame :
And had not bounteous heav'n his forehead arm'd
With impudence unmatched, this keen rebuff
Had stung him ! ”

“ In pearls and gold all gorgeously attir'd,
No arts could deck her native ugliness ;
The demon king might view her as his own—
She carried terror to a bridegroom's eye ! ”

We now proceed to consider a very extensive department of Chinese poetry, the Descriptive, which to us strangers must be the most agreeable of all, and which really possesses some attractive features. The whole language abounds in figurative expressions, derived from the most pleasing or most striking objects and circumstances in nature. Thus "Spring dreams and autumnal clouds" mean fitting visions of happiness—unattainable good is represented by "the moon's reflection in the wave"—"floating clouds obscuring the day" express the temporary shade thrown by detraction on illustrious characters—difficulty of acting is figured by "the grass and tangle in one's path"—female beauty by the obvious and common semblance of "a fair flower"—"spring" is the emblem of joy, "autumn" of sorrow—gladness is expressed by the heart's flowers being all full-blown—the virtue of the female character is pictured under "the white gem, the pure crystal, the cold and transparent ice"—"the season when peach blossoms are in beauty" means that of marriage, as marriages were anciently celebrated in spring—searchers after pleasure are depicted under the figure of "bees and butterflies among flowers"—and so on without end.

There exist a great number of figurative allusions, which contain a particular reference to some event in history or romance; and as the facts, or fables, at which these only *hint*, cannot sometimes be discovered without the assistance of a well-informed native, this circumstance constitutes a considerable obstacle, in the present state of our knowledge, to the successful study of Chinese poetry, anywhere but in the country itself. The following are examples of such allusions:—"The heart that responds to the lute" means yielding to seductive arts, and refers to the story of a young damsel named *Wun keun*, who, being beloved by a youth called *Sze ma*, was serenaded by him on the lute, with a song called *Foong kew hwang*, 鳳求凰 or "the bird *foong* in search of its mate." The story says that *Ke sin toong*, 其心動, "her heart was moved," and she eloped with her admirer towards morning, leaving the traces of her flight along the dewy pathway.

A grateful return for benefits is implied under these expressions: "The spirit which knit the grass"—and "the bird that brought the yellow flowers."

1. An emperor of the dynasty called *Chow* 周, enjoined it on his son and successor to bury alive, after the old Scythian or Tartar fashion, one of his favourite mistresses in the same grave with himself. The son, however, refrained from executing this portion of the imperial will, on the ground of its cruelty, and gave away the lady in marriage to a noble. On making war against the state called *Tsin* 秦, the new emperor was opposed by a formidable leader; but he dreamed at night that he saw the deceased father of the lady he had saved from death, who told him, that in return for the life granted to his daughter, he would assist him against the enemy. The result proved the vision to be prophetic—the hostile leader was defeated, and some invisible agent so twisted the long grass which impeded his flight, as to cause his capture. 2. A person who saw a bird fall to the earth, wounded by an arrow, had the humanity to draw out the weapon, and restore the bird to liberty as soon as it recovered. Being soon afterwards sick and in danger of his life, the bird appeared to him, bearing in its bill some yellow flowers, which the patient was advised to try, and which presently restored him to health.

✓ The poetry of China is not unsupplied with mythological aids: every element of nature—with all the phenomena that these exhibit—each hill, stream, and wood, has its presiding spirit. There is *Hwuy loo*, 會羅, "the monarch of fire;" *Luy koong*, 雷公, "the thunder god;" *Luh shin*, 祿神, "the spirit of the autumnal wave;" and others innumerable. An interesting divinity, called *Yuē laou*, 月老, "the old man of the moon," deserves some notice. It is his particular business to tie together at their birth, with an invisible silken cord, all youths and maidens who are predestined for each other, after which the most distant separation, and apparently insurmountable obstacles, cannot prevent their ultimate union. This is what is called (*Yew yuen*) 有緣, "having a connection in fate." ✓ With such a variety of imaginative resources, and with some of the brightest leaves of the book of nature, displayed to them in an immense tract of

country, surpassed by none in natural advantages, this people would be dull indeed, if they could not turn to some account the materials which they possess.

The muse, too, may call to her assistance the smaller race of fairies, or sprites, who are supposed to haunt the recesses of hills and woods, and to exercise either a benign, or a malicious influence over mortals. Possessing but a vague notion of the ideas which the Chinese really entertained of these imaginary persons, the writer of this applied for information to his Sëenseng (or *pundit*, as such a character would be called less far to the east), and the reply was to this effect: “They are mysterious beings who convert themselves at will into the semblance, sometimes of beautiful women, at others of ugly monsters—in infinite variety. They delight most in frustrating the attempts made by the devotees of Fō, or Buddha, to reach a superhuman state, and whenever these chance to waver the least in their faith or practice, they become immediately *possessed* (“chō leaou moo”), that is, the malicious spirits acquire a dominion over them.” Being asked if he believed in their existence, he seemed rather unprepared to answer, but observed that they possessed the greatest influence over the minds of the country-people, and the devotees of the superstition above-mentioned. It may be noticed, that Confucius neither gave the express sanction of his opinion to the existence of unembodied spirits, nor did he expressly deny the same: but transmitted these early traditions of his country exactly as he found them; busying himself chiefly with the more important concerns of political government and morals.

Several of the pieces already given might be arranged under the descriptive class. The following quotation from a novel, called “The Dreams of the Red Chamber,” is rather a poetical account of a young Chinese profligate, although it consists of a very irregular species of verse, in six and seven words. The version below is lineatim, and almost verbatim, and pretends to nothing more than a very close adherence to the sense of the original; which, it must be remarked, is not an extract from a long poem, but one of those poetical breaks, with which prose works of taste are generally embellished:

無故尋愁覓恨
 有時似俊如狂
 縱然生得好皮囊
 一腸原來是莽
 潦倒不通庶務
 愚頑怕讀文章
 行為偏僻性乖張
 那管人間誹謗

“The paths of trouble heedlessly he braves,
 Now shines a wit—and now a madman raves :
 His outward form by nature’s bounty drest,
 Foul weeds usurped the wilderness, his breast;
 And bred in tumult, ignorant of rule,
 He hated letters—an accomplish’d fool !
 In act depraved, contaminate in mind,
 Strange ! had he fear’d the censures of mankind.

富貴不知樂業
 貧窮難耐淒涼
 可憐辜負好韶光
 于國于家無望
 天下無能第一
 古今不肖無雙
 寄言紈袴與膏粱
 莫效此兒形狀

“Titles and wealth to him no joys impart—
By penury pinch'd, he sank beneath the smart :
Oh, wretch ! to flee the good thy fate intends,
Oh, hopeless ! to thy country and thy friends !
In uselessness, the first beneath the sky,
And curst, in sinning, with supremacy !
Minions of pride and luxury, lend an ear,
And shun his follies, if his fate ye fear !”

The language of descriptive poetry exists in every intermediate gradation, from the perfectly formed couplet and stanza, to those figurative compositions, which differ from prose in little else than the brilliancy of their imagery, or the elevation of their sentiment. Besides the *Tsze*, of which an example has been given in the First Part (page 19), there is a still less fettered species—a kind of impassioned prose, into which the writer of a narrative now and then breaks forth, when inspired by the occasion. The following example is taken from the romance of “The Fortunate Union,” and describes the heroine when she is first seen by her future lover. The parallelisms are marked and divided by colons in the translation :—

嬌媚如花而肌膚光艷羞灼灼之
浮華輕盈似燕而舉止安詳笑翩
翩之失措眉畫春山而淡濃多態
覺春山之有愧眼橫秋水而流轉
生情怪秋水之無神腰纖欲折立
亭亭不怕風吹俊影難描鶴癯癯
最宜月照髮光可鑑不假塗膏秀
色堪殮何須膩粉慧心悄悄越掩
越靈望而知其為仙子中人俠骨
冷冷愈柔愈烈察而識其非閨閣
之秀蕙性蘭心初只疑美人顏色
珠圓玉潤久方知君子風流

“ With the delicacy of a flower, her complexion displayed a clear brilliancy which put to shame the floating light of day : with the buoyant lightness of the swallow, her movements were ordered with inimitable grace and propriety. The arches of her brows were like the outlines of the vernal hills in the distance, but in their changeful expression they shamed the varying tints of even the vernal hills : the brightness of her eyes equalled that of the clear wave in autumn, but the living sentiment which flowed from them made you wonder how the autumnal wave had lost its deity.* Her waist, like a thread in fineness, seemed ready to break ; yet was it straight and erect, and feared not the fanning breeze : the shadowy graces of her person it was as difficult to delineate, as the form of the white bird, rising from the ground by moonlight. The natural gloss of her hair resembled the bright polish of a mirror, without the false assistance of unguents : her face was perfectly lovely in itself, and needed not paint to adorn it. The native intelligence of her mind seemed to have gathered strength from retirement ; and beholding her, you might know she was of a superior order of beings : the cold and rigid strictness of her manners, severe as she herself was soft and delicate, proved her to be no ordinary inhabitant of the female apartments. Her sweet and feminine disposition, comparable to fragrant flowers, might lead one at first to class her with other fair ones : but the perfection of this pearl, the polish of this gem, discoverable on a longer acquaintance, proved that she possessed qualities not inferior to the most spirited of the opposite sex.”

Under the descriptive class may be properly introduced a very singular production—a poem on London, composed by a Chinese who visited England about the year 1813. Some notice of it appeared, for the first time, in the *Quarterly Review* for 1817 ; but the present opportunity admits of the translation being accompanied by the original. No apology, perhaps, is needed for the insertion of the whole poem, notwithstanding its length, considering that it is a native of the remotest shores of Asia who sings the glories of the British capital—“ *Præsertim cùm omne studium atque omne ingenium contulerit Archias, ad populi Romani gloriam laudemque celebrandam.*”—The reviewer made a trivial mistake in stating that it was written by “ a common Chinese,” for the author was in a respectable station of life, and a person of good acquirements, who accompanied home an English gentleman as his instructor in the language. He was in fact a very *uncommon* Chinese, inasmuch as he appears to have possessed an inclination and capacity

* Called *Lûshin*.

for observation, by no means usual among his travelled countrymen, who are generally of a class much inferior to himself. The remarks are, as might be expected, confined exclusively to objects which at once strike the eye, and they do not extend to the remoter points of intelligent investigation, since the author's very limited knowledge of our language, and total inability to comprehend the nature of our institutions, placed such higher objects entirely out of his reach. Being a simple description, the poem contains but few flights of fancy; and as it would be a hopeless attempt, however well they may sound in Chinese, to give dignity in verse to matters so perfectly domestic and familiar to ourselves, it has been judged best to subjoin a literal prose translation:—

LONDON, IN TEN STANZAS.

千	獨	心	意	樓	地	有	海
戈	恨	好	誠	高	冷	國	遙
不	佛	尚	尊	可	宜	號	西
暫	啞	持	禮	摘	親	英	北
停	嘶	經	拜	星	火	崙	極

1.

Afar in the ocean, towards the extremities of the north-west,
 There is a nation, or country, called ENGLAND :
 The clime is frigid, and you are compelled to approach the fire ;
 The houses are so lofty, that you may pluck the stars :
 The pious inhabitants respect the ceremonies of worship.
 And the virtuous among them ever read the Sacred books :
 They bear a peculiar enmity towards the *French* nation,*
 The weapons of war rest not for a moment (between them).

* In 1813.

夫	由	佳	少	在	賦	層	山
婦	來	人	女	地	人	巒	澤
樂	情	白	紅	應	尊	展	鍾
相	愛	玉	花	坤	女	畫	靈
依	重	肌	臉	滋	貴	眉	秀

2.

Their fertile hills, adorned with the richest luxuriance,
 Resemble, in the outline of their summits, the arched eyebrows (of a fair woman).
 The inhabitants are inspired with a respect for the female sex,
 Who in this land correspond with the perfect features of nature :
 Their young maidens have cheeks resembling red blossoms,
 And the complexion of their beauties is like the white gem :
 Of old has connubial affection been highly esteemed among them,
 Husband and wife delight in mutual harmony.

烟	相	尋	拾	欄	草	行	夏
霧	呼	花	麥	潤	長	人	月
恐	早	興	歌	任	資	不	村
迷	回	未	宜	棲	牧	斷	郊
留	首	休	唱	牛	馬	遊	晚

3.

In the summer evenings, through the hamlets and gardens beyond the town,
 Crowds of walkers ramble without number :
 The grass is allowed to grow as a provision for horses,
 And enclosures of wooden-rails form pastures for cattle.

The harvest is gathered in with the singing of songs :
The loiterers roam in search of flowers without end,
And call to each other to return in good time,
Lest the foggy clouds bewilder and detain them.

人	最	跳	曲	衣	生	燈	戲
人	是	舞	歌	裝	旦	後	樓
笑	詼	鼓	琴	錦	姿	綵	闕
臉	諧	簫	笛	繡	容	屏	永
迴	趣	催	和	裁	美	開	晝

4.

Their theatres are closed during the long days ;
It is after dark that the painted scenes are displayed :
The faces of the actors are handsome to behold,
And their dresses are composed of silk and satin :
Their voices resound in unison with stringed and wind instruments,
And they dance to the inspiring note of drums and flutes :
It constitutes the perfection of harmonious delight,
Every one retires with a smiling countenance.

形	洛	河	石	人	舟	三	兩
勢	陽	流	磴	馬	船	橋	岸
畧	天	九	千	步	過	隔	分
相	下	派	層	雲	膀	水	南
同	冠	溶	疊	中	下	通	北

5.

The two banks of the river lie to the north and south,
 Three bridges interrupt the stream, and form a communication.
 Vessels of every kind pass between the arches,
 While men and horses pace among the clouds :
 A thousand masses of stone rise one above the other,
 And the river flows through nine channels :
 The bridge of *Loyang*, which out-tops all in our empire,
 Is in shape and size somewhat like these.

何	六	佳	公	雲	人	帝	富
處	街	人	子	樹	工	城	庶
種	花	曳	馳	萬	鬪	雙	烟
桑	柳	穀	車	人	物	鳳	花
蘇	地	紗	馬	家	垂	闕	地

6.

It is a rich, populous, and highly adorned land,
 Its workmen vie with each other in the excellence of their manufactures.
 Within the circuit of the imperial residence is a splendid palace ;
 Lofty trees are immingled with unnumbered dwellings.
 The young gentry ride in wheel-carriages and on horseback.
 And the fair women clothe themselves in silken garments :
 *The space in each street being devoted to ornament,
 Where is there room for the mere useful productions of the earth ?

* Literally, " Every street being devoted to flowers and willows, where is there space to plant mulberries and hemp (to produce silk and flax) ?"—There are explanatory notes, and a commentary, in the original, which we have not thought it necessary to give here.

樓宇畫圖中
最宜街上望
玻牕綴錦紅
粉壁塗文采
河水繞牆通
鐵欄傍戶密
豪華第宅隆
高閣層層上

7.

The towering edifices rise story above story,
In all the stateliness of splendid mansions :
Railings of iron thickly stud the sides of every entrance,
And streams from the river circulate through the walls :
The sides of each apartment are variegated with devices ;
Through the windows of glass appear the scarlet hangings ;
And in the street itself is presented a beautiful scene,
The congregated buildings have all the aspect of a picture.

破壤及時修
樓房多寂寞
魚鰕價賤秋
車馬聲寥日
探友落鄉陬
移家入村郭
人情樂遠遊
九月蘭蓀裡

8.

In London, about the period of the ninth moon,
The inhabitants delight in travelling to a distance :
They change their abodes, and betake themselves to the country,
Visiting their friends in their rural retreats :

The prolonged sound of carriages and steeds is heard through the day :
 Then in autumn the prices of provisions fall :
 And the greater number of dwellings being untenanted,
 Such as require it are repaired and adorned.

火	晚	冬	夜	中	兩	條	大
燭	燈	寒	市	道	傍	條	路
燦	懸	雪	人	騁	行	十	多
星	路	積	喧	駢	士	字	平
如	際	塗	店	車	女	衢	坦

9.

The spacious streets are exceedingly smooth and level,
 Each being crossed by others at intervals :
 On either side perambulate men and women,
 In the centre career along the carriages and horses ;
 The mingled sound of voices is heard in the shops at evening :
 During midwinter the heaped-up snows adhere to the pathway ;
 Lamps are displayed at night along the street sides,
 Whose radiance twinkles like the stars of the sky.

入	土	佳	美	烘	濃	由	地
席	風	醪	饌	麵	茶	來	冷
預	尊	酌	盛	裹	調	不	難
更	飲	玉	銀	脂	酪	阻	栽
衣	食	卮	盒	肥	潤	饑	稻

10.

The climate is too cold for the cultivation of rice,
But they have for ages been exempt from the evils of famine ;
With strong tea they imingle rich cream,
And their baked wheaten bread is involved in unctuous lard.
Here excellent meats are served in covers of silver,
And fine wines are poured into gem-like cups ;
The custom of the country pays respect to the ceremony of meals,
Previous to the repast, they make a change in their vestments.

Of a similar description with the stanzas on London is another poem, not concerning the English exclusively, but Europeans in general, composed by a Hong merchant who has been dead some years. This person, notwithstanding his unpoetical profession, was possessed of very respectable literary acquirements, and one of his sons held a high rank in the Imperial College at Peking :—"After an intercourse of thirty years (to use his own expressions), which had made him tolerably familiar with the peculiarities of foreigners, he had retired, stricken in years, into solitude, and amused himself over his cups (like Le-tae-pī, of course) in composing a score of stanzas commemorative of some strange customs and opinions prevailing beyond the seas."—The production corresponds with its title, *Se-yang tsa yoon*, 西洋雜詠 "Unconnected Stanzas on Europeans," and after the perusal of the foregoing description from a person who had viewed us at home, may be deemed curious, as depicting the estimation formed of us by one who had never left his own country. With that want of minute discrimination which might be expected under such circumstances, the verses treat chiefly of those leading features which are common to all nations wearing hats and coats, and mingle, together with the rest, the Papist rites and ceremonies of the Portuguese at Macao. Being less interesting to Englishmen than the poem which has already been given at full length, it may suffice to present an abstract of whatever observations it contains most deserving of notice.

The retired Bard commences with lauding the good faith of the foreigners,

who "make use of no formality, in their most extensive bargains, more solemn than a mere shake of the hand," and proceeds to hint, in the next verse, that "the simple virtues of barbarians have been the subject of praise from the oldest times." It is quite true that commercial transactions of the largest description are frequently conducted at Canton on the mere faith of promises; and the good poet had never been in the way of seeing our legal stamps and lawyers' bills at home, which might have gone far to make him withdraw his last compliment.

"When a guest arrives, the host helps him with his own hand to the juice of the grape;" and it is added in a note, "they welcome visitors with wine, and not with tea," which is the Chinese fashion. "To touch glasses in drinking is a mark of friendship. In winter evenings they sit by the fire, and pour out *cold* wine, careless of the snows which lie deep beyond the door." In China they always warm their wine. So they sometimes do in England, witness "Oxford Nightcaps."

"They make light of their lives," it is observed, "on occasions of personal contest, and when two of them quarrel, the consequences may be very serious. They stand face to face, and discharge fire-arms at each other on a given signal." In a note it is said, "If one fall, the survivor is not punished: if neither fall, there is an end of the quarrel." "They do this," adds the poet, "to show that they are not afraid—and so forth." An unconscious satire on the absurd custom of duelling, which our successors will rank with the "trial by battle," the *corsned*, and the drowning of witches.

Our author marvels much at the comparatively late period at which Europeans marry, but endeavours to explain it in this way: "Their distant voyages abroad keep them long from home, and it is not until they have accumulated a fortune that they return to take a wife. Many do not marry before fifty years of age; and if the bride be very young on these occasions, it is nothing unusual." The knowledge of the worthy Hong merchant on this subject seems to have been much on a par with that of the St. Helena lady, who asked if London were not thrown into great excitement by the arrival of the Indian fleet.*

* Mentioned as long ago as by Horace Walpole.

“ In the regulation of the annual period, they have no intercalary moon, but the new year always commences ten days after the winter solstice. On this occasion they powder their heads with white dust, and all get tipsy.” This evidently refers to good old times, and to manners now gone by. The author himself adds in a note: “This habit has of late years worn out.” There is a variety of other detached observations, less worthy of notice, and the poem concludes with mentioning, that “the foreigners had been fighting together for some twenty years; but it was to be hoped they would soon make peace with one another, and all have an opportunity of improving themselves by an intercourse with China.” Which they have since done, somewhat at China’s expense.

In some remarks on the origin and progress of this distant Literature in England,* I observed that there was a favourable specimen of Poetry in the Eighth Volume of the Chinese Repository. The subject is the gathering of Tea-leaves among the hills in Spring. The young girl who sings the ballad describes the scenery, the weather, her own feelings, &c., and displays a natural and half-childish vanity which is at once pleasing and amusing. A very neat English version has since been made by Mr. W. T. MERCER, M.A. Oxon, and this so well conveys both the sense and the style of the original, that it has been printed below, stanza for stanza, page for page with the Chinese. The correspondent of the Repository states that the original was obtained from one of the merchants of the Green-tea country, being prettily printed on a square sheet of paper with a flowered red border. He remarks that it illustrates many points in the construction of Chinese verse, pointed out in the first edition of this present treatise. But the simple and popular nature of the Ballad would have rendered such niceties of construction, as have been explained in Part I., quite out of place. The verse, accordingly, is of that careless, easy and flowing character best suited to the occasion.

* Chinese Miscellanies, p. 70.

詞 茶 采

TEA-PICKING BALLAD.

———00———

教	不	霧	空		問	小	提	曉		朝	社	村	農	
農	識	葉	濛	三	上	姑	籃	起	二	朝	後	北	家	一
辛	爲	雲	曉		松	大	出	臨		早	雨	村	家	
苦	誰	芽	色		羅	婦	戶	粧		起	前	南	住	
日	來	未	早		第	同	霧	畧		課	忙	盡	萬	
雙	解	易	山		幾	携	方	整		茶	不	茗	山	
雙	渴	降	砵		峰	手	濃	容		工	了	叢	中	

I.

Where thousand hills the vale enclose, our little hut is there,
 And on the sloping sides around, the Tea grows everywhere;
 And I must rise at early dawn, as busy as can be,
 To get my daily labour done, and pluck the leafy tea.

II.

At early dawn I seize my crate, and sighing, oh, for rest,
 Through the thick mist I pass the door, with sloven hair half-drest;
 The dames and maidens call to me, as hand in hand they go,
 "What steep do you, miss, climb to-day, what steep of high Sunglo?"

III.

Dark is the sky, the twilight dim still on the hills is set,
 The dewy leaves and cloudy buds may not be gather'd yet;
 Oh, who are they, the thirsty ones, for whom this work we do;
 For whom we spend our daily toil, in bands of two and two?

試	行	葉	一		驚	同	提	采		更	既	細	雙	
看	向	小	池	六	起	人	藍	罷	五	防	恐	語	雙	四
儂	磯	如	碧		雙	笑	貯	枝		來	梢	叮	相	
貌	頭	錢	水		鳧	向	滿	頭		日	頭	嚀	伴	
近	清	半	浸		雨	池	始	葉		雨	芽	莫	采	
何	淺	未	芙		處	前	言	自		絲	欲	要	茶	
如	處	舒	渠		飛	過	歸	稀		絲	老	遲	枝	

IV.

Like fellows we each other aid, and to each other say,
 As down we pull the yielding twigs, "Sweet sister, don't delay;
 E'en now the buds are growing old, all on the boughs atop,
 And then to-morrow—who can tell?—the drizzling rain may drop."

V.

We've picked enow, the topmost bough is bare of leaves, and so
 We lift our brimming loads, and by the homeward path we go;
 In merry laughter by the pool, the lotus pool we lie,
 When hark! uprise a Mallard pair, and hence affrighted fly!

VI.

Limpid and clear the pool, and there how rich the lotus grows,
 And only half its opening leaves, round as the coins, it shows—
 I bend me o'er the jutting brink, and to myself I say,
 I marvel in the glassy stream, how looks my face to-day?

忘	忽	忙	今		相	采	小	朝		雨	只	誰	兩	
却	忽	梳	九		看	得	笠	來	八	灑	緣	家	鬢	七
泥	便	鴉			却	旗	長	風		風	日	有	翳	
滓	向	髻			是	鎗	藍	雨		吹	日	婦	鬆	
未	園	緊			半	歸	手	又		失	將	醜	貌	
換	中	橫			身	去	自	淒		故	茶	如	帶	
鞋	去	叙	佳		泥	後	提	淒		吾	采	奴	枯	

VII.

My face is dirty, out of trim my hair is, and awry,
 Oh tell me where's the little girl so ugly now as I?
 'Tis all because whole weary hours I'm forc'd to pick the tea,
 And driving winds and soaking show'rs have made me what you see!

VIII.

With morn again come wind and rain, and though so fierce and strong,
 With basket big and little hat I wend my way along;
 Then home once more, when all is pick'd, and everybody sees
 How muddy all our dresses are, and dabbled to the knees!

IX.

I saw this morning through the door a pleasant day set in,
 Be sure I quickly drest my hair, and neatly fix'd my pin;
 And featly sped I down the path to gain the wonted spot,
 But, never thinking of the mire, my working shoes forgot!

染	高	樊	雨		只	手	衣	小		把	遙	濕	園	
得	低	來	過	十	少	中	衫	笠	十	儂	囑	透	中	十
衣	摘	香	枝	二	長	提	半	蒙	一	青	鄰	弓	纔	
襟	盡	氣	頭		竿	着	濕	頭		笠	姑	鞋	到	
處	黃	便	汎		與	青	像	不		寄	傳	未	又	
處	金	氤	碧		細	絲	漁	庇		將	信	肯	聞	
芬	縷	氲	紋		綸	籠	人	身		來	去	回	雷	

X.

'The garden reach'd, my bow-shap'd shoes are soaking through and through ;
 And the sky is chang'd—the thunder rolls—I don't know what to do ;
 I'll call my comrades on the hill to pass the word with speed,
 And fetch my green umbrella hat, to help me in my need.

XI.

But my little hat does little good, my plight is very sad !
 I stand with clothes all dripping wet, like some poor fisher-lad ;
 Like him I have a basket, too, of meshes woven fine,
 A fisher-lad, if I only had his fishing rod and line.

XII.

'The rain is o'er, the outer leaves their branching fibres show,
 Shake down the branch, and the fragrant scent about us 'gins to blow ;
 Gather the yellow golden threads that high and low are found—
 Ah, what a precious odour now is wafted all around '

怎	更	早	一	賽	惟	鴉	番	今	采	品	芬	
不	深	時	月	他	願	髻	番	朝	罷	色	芳	十
教	尚	出	十	雀	儂	斜	辛	已	新	休	香	三
人	在	采	五	曾	家	家	苦	是	芽	寧	氣	
損	爐	暮		與	茶	玉	不	第	施	勝	似	
玉	前	方	一	龍	色	指	辭	三	又	葵	蘭	
顏	焙	還	日	團	好	寒	難	番	發	源	蓀	
			閒									

XIII.

No sweeter perfume does the wild and fair Aglaia shed,
 Throughout Woo-yuen's bounds my tea the choicest will be said ;
 When all are pick'd we'll leave the shoots to bud again in spring,
 But for this morning we have done the third, last gathering.

XIV.

Oh, weary is our picking, yet do I my toil withhold ?
 My maiden locks are all askew, my pearly fingers cold ;
 I only wish our tea to be superior over all,
 O'er this one's "sparrow-tongue," and o'er the other's "dragon ball."*

XV.

Oh, for a month I weary strive to find a leisure day,
 I go to pick at early dawn, and until dusk I stay ;
 Till midnight at the firing-pan I hold my irksome place ;
 But may not labour hard as this impair my pretty face ?

* Technical terms.

愁	綠	雙	雨		遍	無	那	活		閒	知	焙	容	
上	何	雙	橫	十	體	端	知	火	十	教	是	出	顏	十
心	夫	猶	風	八	淋	一	摘	煎	七	織	何	金	雖	六
來	壻	自	狂		淋	陳	取	來		手	人	芽	瘦	
手	輕	戀	鳥		似	狂	苦	破		侍	調	分	志	
忘	言	花	離		水	風	多	寂		兒	玉	外	常	
稍	別	梢	巢		澆	雨	嬌	寥		煎	碗	妍	堅	

XVI.

But if my face be somewhat lank, more firm shall be my mind,
 I'll fire my tea that all else shall be my golden buds behind ;
 But yet the thought arises, who the pretty maid shall be,
 To put the leaves in jewell'd cup, from thence to drink my tea ?

XVII.

Her griefs all flee as she makes her tea, and she is glad, but oh,
 Where shall she learn the toils of us who labour for her so ?
 And shall she know of the winds that blow, and the rains that pour their wrath,
 And drench and soak us through and through, as plunged into a bath.

XVIII.

In driving rains and howling winds the birds forsake the nest,
 Yet many a loving pair are seen still on the boughs to rest ;
 Oh, wherefore, lov'd one, with light look didst thou send me away ?
 I cannot, grieving as I grieve, go through my work to day.

笑	途	松	手		今	焙	尙	工		縷	只	且	縱	
指	中	羅	挽	二	朝	出	覺	夫	二	縷	圖	安	使	十
前	姊	山	筠	十	還	乾	禮	那	十	旗	焙	貧	愁	九
村	妹	下	藍	一	要	茶	家	敢		鎗	得	苦	腸	
是	勞	采	鬢		上	忙	事	自		起	新	莫	似	
妾	相	山	戴		松	去	務	蹉		白	茶	辭	桔	
家	間	茶	花		蘿	采	多	跚		毫	好	勞	槁	

XIX.

But though my bosom rise and fall, like bucket in a well,
 Patient and toiling as I am, 'gainst work I'll near rebel,
 My care shall be to have my tea fired to a tender brown,
 And let the *flag* and *awl*, well roll'd, display their whitish down.*

XX.

Hah, for my toil, ho, for my steps! aweary tho' I be,
 In our poor house, for working folk, there's lots of work, I see;
 When the firing and the drying's done, off at the call I go,
 And once again this very morn I climb the high Sung-lo!

XXI.

My wicker basket slung on arm, and hair entwined with flowers,
 To the slopes I go of the high Sung-lo, and pick the tea for hours;
 How laugh we, sisters, on the road—what a merry turn we've got!
 I giggle and say, as I point down the way—there, look, there lies our cot.

* The *flag* is the name for the terminal shoots, where they just begin to unroll; the *awl* designates those which are still unrolled, and sharp-pointed. This may be easily observed in the finest black tea, called by us Pekoe, covered with a white down, *Pak-ho*, whence the name.

睡	小	携	今		道	西	焙	乍		到	明	一	妾	
倚	姑	籃	日	二	是	山	茶	暖	二	門	日	帶	家	二
欄	更	候	西	十	多	日	天	還	十	先	若	青	樓	十
杆	覺	伴	山	四	晴	落	色	寒	三	覺	蒙	陰	屋	二
喚	嬌	坐	山		却	東	最	屢		焙	來	護	傍	
不	覺	村	色		少	山	難	變		茶	約	草	垂	
醒	慣	亭	青		晴	雨	平	更		香	伴	堂	楊	

XXII.

Your handmaid 'neath the sweet green shade in shelter'd cot abides,
 Where the pendent willow's sweeping bough the thatch'd dwelling hides:
 To-morrow, if you wish it so, my guests I pray you'll be!
 The door you'll know by the fragrant scent, the scent of the firing tea.

XXIII.

Awhile 'tis cold, and then 'tis warm, when I want to fire my tea,
 The sky is sure to shift and change—and all to worry me:
 When the Sun goes down on the western hills, on the eastern there is rain!
 And however fair he promises, he promises in vain.

XXIV.

To-day the tint of the western hills is looking bright and fair,
 And I bear my crate to the stile, and wait my fellow toiler there:
 A little tender lass is she—she leans upon the rail,
 And sleeps—and though I hail her, she answers not my hail.

說	攀	可	黃		樹	欲	樓	同		提	忽	半	直	
到	枝	人	鳥	二	高	待	畔	行	二	着	忽	開	待	二
傷	各	天	枝	十	不	折	花	迤	十	藍	便	媚	高	五
心	把	氣	頭	七	攀	來	開	邐	六	兒	向	眼	呼	
淚	衷	半	美		到	分	海	過		忘	前	若	始	
不	情	晴	好		梢	插	石	南		着	頭	難	應	
禁	訴	陰	音		頭	戴	榴	樓		簾	走	勝	承	

XXV.

And when at length, to my loudest call, she murmurs a reply,
 'Tis as if hard to conquer sleep, and with half-opened eye;
 Up starts she, and with straggling steps along the path she's gone;
 She brings her basket, but forgets to put the cover on!

XXVI.

Together trudge we, and we pass the lodge of the southern bowers,
 Where the beautiful sea-pomegranate waves all its yellow flowers;
 Fain would we stop and pluck a few to deck our tresses gay,
 But the tree is high, and 'tis vain to try to reach the tempting spray.

XXVII.

The pretty birds upon the bough sing songs so sweet to hear,
 And the sky is so delicious now, half cloudy and half clear;
 While bending o'er her work, each maid will prattle of her woe,
 And we talk till our hearts are sorely hurt, and tears unstinted flow.

從	却	去	任		栢	不	箇	茶		纖	無	北	破	
教	把	采	他	三	破	知	中	品	二	手	端	枝	却	二
露	袖	新	飛	十	儂	却	滋	由	十	擎	折	尋	工	十
出	兒	茶	燕		家	爲	味	來	九	來	得	罷	夫	八
手	高	換	自		玉	誰	兩	苦		鬢	同	又	未	
纖	捲	舊	呢		指	甜	般	勝		上	心	圖	滿	
纖	起	衫	喃		尖	苦	兼	甜		簪	葉	南	藍	

XXVIII.

Our time is up, and yet not full our baskets to the mouth,
 The twigs anorth are fully search'd, let's seek them in the south;
 Just then by chance I snapped a twig whose leaves were all apart;
 See, with my taper fingers now I fix it in my hair.

XXIX.

Of all the various kinds of tea, the bitter beats the sweet,
 But for whomever either seeks, for him I'll find a treat;
 Though who it is shall drink them, as bitter or sweet they be,
 I know not, friend—but the pearly end of my finger only see!

XXX.

Ye twittering swallows rise and fall, in your flight around the hill,
 But when next I go to the high Sunglo, I'll change my gown—I will;
 And I'll roll up the cuff and show arm enough, for my arm is fair to see;
 Oh, if ever there were a fair round arm, that arm belongs to me!

A retrospect of our subject might tend to show, that the poetry in question most naturally arranges itself under three general heads : 1. Odes and Songs; 2. Moral and Didactic Pieces ; 3. Descriptive and Sentimental. These different kinds are, however, so blended together occasionally, and run so much into one another, that it is not always very easy, nor indeed perhaps is it of much consequence, to separate them. It has been remarked before, that as the substance and dialogue of their drama is always in prose, and the musical parts come properly under the definition of songs, the Chinese cannot with strictness be said to possess what *we mean* by dramatic poetry, that is, tragedies or plays of any kind composed mainly in verse.

At the end of this treatise will be found a miscellaneous selection of poetical pieces, extracted at random ; and for the satisfaction of those who may prefer such a mode, they are accompanied, not by metrical versions, but by prose translations, as literal as they could be well rendered ; although it must always be kept in mind, this is a most disadvantageous dress for the poetry of any language whatever.

In thus coming to a conclusion, the author feels himself bound, as well for the sake of the subject, as his own, to notice the manner in which Professor Rémusat, of Paris, has done him the honour to quote his opinion regarding Chinese poetry. In the preface to his translation of the *Tu-keau-le*, 玉嬌梨 when treating of the passages in verse with which that novel is interspersed, and of their frequent obscurity, M. Rémusat observes, “ Le traducteur des Nouvelles dont j’ai précédemment fait mention, assure que les vers dont il s’agit sont principalement destinés à flatter l’oreille, et que le sens y est très souvent sacrifié à l’harmonie.” Now the passage to which M. Rémusat alludes is the following, and it confines itself so expressly to the *musical*, or *operatic portions of the drama*, that it would seem impossible to extend its application either to novels, or to any other part of Chinese literature : “ A considerable portion of the PLAYS of the Chinese consists of a sort of irregular verse, which is *sung*, or *chanted with music*. This is often very obscure in its import ; and as, according to the Chinese themselves, the gratification of the ear is its main object, sense itself appears sometimes to be neglected (not

sacrificed), for the sake of a pleasing sound." That this is really the case, as regards the songs of the drama alone, is proved, as well by the verbal testimony of natives, as by the following passage from the preface to "The Hundred Plays of Yuen," which refers chiefly to stage rules:—

譜識要後腔明要先大低也害爲不律音傷不訛差有字雖

"Although the words may be wrong, provided that the laws of sound and cadence be not violated, there is no harm done:—generally speaking, the study of the tune, or air, must be the first consideration, and the knowledge of the part (or rôle) the second." This is all extremely possible, and finds a parallel in our own opera and stage songs, some of which are sufficiently insignificant, and intended merely as pegs to hang musical notes upon—but that he should ever have said anything so extravagant regarding poems which are addressed expressly to the *eye* and the *understanding*, and to them only, the writer of this must utterly disclaim. As M. Rémusat could not have intended to misrepresent his meaning, he feels persuaded that the quotation was made from memory.

Since it would appear, then, that Chinese poetry generally *has* a meaning, ✓ although this meaning may not always be very easy to arrive at,* some effectual means of increasing our acquaintance with it is perhaps one of the greatest desiderata in eastern literature. It is very easy to "harden ignorance into contempt," and to assume that whatever is unknown is not worth knowing: but the excellent use which has already been made (witness Moore's poems) of oriental thoughts and imagery, derived from languages of Asia more familiar to us, might encourage some extension in the range of our enquiries. Fruits of the highest culture may be improved and varied by foreign grafts; and as our gardens have already been indebted to China for a few choice flowers, who knows but our poetry may some day lie under a similar obligation? However small the prospect of advantage, every scrap

* "La langue poétique des Chinois est véritablement intraduisible; on pourrait peut-être ajouter qu'elle est souvent *inintelligible*."—M. REMUSAT.

of *novelty* may turn out to be a real gain ;—the declining age of some of the finest literature the world ever saw having borne witness, that ordinary topics of poetry will at last grow threadbare, and become tiresome through much use :—

“ Nota magis nulli domus est sua, quàm mihi lucus
 Martis, et Æoliis vicinum rupibus antrum
 Vulcani—quid agant venti, quas torqueat umbras
 Æacus—unde alius furtivæ devehat aurum
 Pelliculæ—quantas jaculetur Monychus ornos :
 —Exspèctes eadem a summo, minimoque poetâ.”

MISCELLANEOUS POETRY.

點	回	凌	我	飛	揮	芙	高
點	看	風	作	雪	天	蓉	瀑
暮	吳	控	雲	走	開	九	三
烟	楚	杳	中	雷	日	疊	千
青	裏	冥	鶴	霆	月	屏	尺

*On ascending the Highest Peak of the Leushan.**

There falls a precipitous cascade of three thousand feet ;
 Here the Hibiscus shades every rising summit ;
 The mountain touches the sky, and separates the orbs ;
 The drifting snows fly amidst the thunder.
 I am like the white bird among the clouds,
 I insult the winds, and invade the powerful abyss.
 —As I turn and look down on each neighbouring province,
 The evening smoke of the dwellings rises in blue specks.

* A mountain near the Po-yang Lake, visited by the Embassy in 1816.

青 又 落 流 殊 縱 相 十
山 作 葉 雲 非 有 見 年
何 南 不 多 少 重 即 不
處 來 歸 逐 壯 來 相 相
期 雁 枝 影 時 約 離 見

On taking leave of a Friend.

Ten years have elapsed since last we parted,
And no sooner have we met, than we part again :
We may bind ourselves by promises to renew this meeting,
But we shall never be so young as we are now !
The shadows of the passing clouds speedily vanish—
The fallen leaf returns not to its branch :
Should I fly, like the wild bird, to seek you in the south,
In what what part of yon blue mountains shall we meet ?

珍 兒 風 露 雲 芳 羅 文
重 童 清 濕 路 菲 浮 彩
此 憐 錦 丹 好 那 是 宜
行 復 翅 囊 翔 可 汝 深
藏 損 長 重 翔 久 鄉 隱

On giving liberty to a Butterfly.

Those variegated hues should be less rashly exposed,
The recesses of the mountains are thy proper haunts :
The fragrant, but short-lived herbs are there,
And those airy paths will best suit thy flight :
Thy crimson form is heavy with dew,
Thy embroidered wings should expatiate in the clear breeze :
Destruction here awaits thee from the fondness of the boy,
Go then, and hide thy treasures from his reach.

剪伐實堪哉 恨無柯在手 陰含萬古苔 影蔽三冬日 落葉掃難開 高花飛不斷 崔嵬信不材 惡樹何年值

*On a worthless Tree.**

In what year wast thou planted, vile tree !
 Thy lofty, bare trunk, is truly good for nothing :
 Thy blossoms fly aloft incessantly,
 Thy falling leaves there is no sweeping away :
 Thou hidest the sun during the winter months ;
 The shady side of thee is overrun with old moss :
 Alas, that I had not an axe in my hand,
 To cut thee away, as thou well deservest !

長嘯一徘徊 瓊南清絕地 風多不辨雷 海響先知雨 孤鴈且南迴 浮雲未北返 飛花亂開 作客春將暮

Written at the Capital of the Island of Haenan.

While here I travel, the Spring is drawing to a close;
 The blossoms fly confusedly, and leave their branches :
 I am a floating cloud that returns not north,
 I am a solitary wildfowl, bewildered in the south :
 By the ocean's murmur, the rainy storm is approaching,
 The loudness of the winds conceals the thunder's sound :
 This *Keungnan* is a land clean divided from my home,
 Here I breathe my long sighs, all perplexed and irresolute.

* "Ille et nefasto te posuit die," &c. *Horat. in Arborem*, II. 13.

虹亭橋畔海螺東
蘭芷羅生別作叢
芳氣自盈空谷裏
一枝飛入玉瓶中
蕭蕭孤影如良友
習習虛堂有素風
日夕馨香懷袖裏
不知心賞有誰同

On a Sprig of Epidendrum, in a Porcelain Vase.

By the side of Hoongting bridge, to the east of the stream Haelo,
There grows thickly the Epidendrum, making a grove of its own:
Its fragrant breath fills the lonely valley,
And a single sprig hath flown hither, to replenish this precious vase:
The solitary flower finds a companion in its own shadow,
Blown by the gentle breeze that pervades my empty hall:
My sleeves are scented with its morning and evening sweets,
I know of none whose delight in it can equal mine.

懨懨低歛淡黃衫
緊抱孤芳未許探
香口倦開檀半掩
苦心欲吐栢猶含
一枝瘦去容儀病
幾辦攢來影帶慚
不是畏寒疑不放
要留春色占江南

Inscribed under the Drawing of a wax-coloured Calycanthus. (Lǎmei.)

Tranquilly bending, clothed in its vest of pale yellow,
 The flower preserves, in single seclusion, its inviolate sweets :
 With faintly opening mouth, its fragrance is but half exhaled,
 Like some half-told sorrow, still half undisclosed :
 It droops, with slender stalk, in delicate guise,
 While its close petals carry all the aspect of modesty :
 Deem not, that fear of the chill will prevents it from blowing—
 It reserves those vernal hues to compete with the fairest flowers of *Keangnan*.

枝	休	疑	莫	欲	認	仔	一
頭	怪	是	非	稱	作	細	梅
春	題	初	殘	白	紅	看	忽
色	詩	醒	醉	面	顏	來	作
費	難	箔	微	帶	饒	覺	兩
商	下	曉	添	霞	雪	異	重
量	筆	粧	暈	光	色	常	芳

On the Drawing of a blush-coloured Plum Blossom. (Meihwa.)

One flower combines in itself all the merits of two,
 While a closer examination only displays its rare charms :
 Would you style it a rosy beauty—it is rich, too, in snowy hues ;
 Would you call it a pale one—it displays the tints of the morning sky :
 It resembles some fair complexion, slightly heightened by wine—
 It is like some maiden, risen fresh from sleep to her morning toilet :
 Cease to wonder at the hesitation of the poet's pencil ;
 The loveliness of the object has dispersed his powers of thought !"

相與訴孤寂 如將平生心 唧唧鳴空壁 寒蟲一何悲 孤燈坐永夕 依然扃柴扉 起行無所適 夜中不能寐

Midnight Thoughts.

1. 'Tis the depth of night, and I cannot slumber—
I rise up and stroll without object or purpose ;
I return, and again bar my humble door,
And sit by my solitary lamp until the morning—
What is the cause of lament to that cricket,
Whose monotonous note sounds from yon bare wall ?
It would seem to take up the history of its life,
—To tell me of its state of solitary desertion.

憂傷終難極 悠悠百年間 安忘故園戚 未知他鄉意 蒼芒雲水錫 關山去千里 我行當遠役 孤寂亦可苦

2. This solitary desertion !—how bitter do I find it !
Let me then push my roving to a distance :
Let me visit the passes and mountains a hundred leagues hence,
Like some devotee of Buddha, wandering amidst clouds and torrents.
Ignorant of what is passing elsewhere,
How shall I forget the melancholy of my own home ?
Thus dull and mournful through life's whole course,
My sorrows and pains can never have an end.

披衣起待月
待月月偏遲
儵忽峰坳出
先來樹杪時
金波何蕩漾
銀漢渺參差
直到參橫後
猶然去夢思

On getting up to see the Moon rise.

I throw on my clothes, and wait for the Moon,
—I wait for the Moon, which rises late :
She breaks at length from behind yon hilly summit,
And first illumines the tops of the trees :
How ruffled is the surface of yon golden waves !
The silver stream of the sky * displays a vague and unequal light :
Thus lingering until the stars of Orion (*Tsan*) have set,
I return to sleep, and dream all over again.

長老峰前青帝歸
長老峰下雨聲稀
桃花李花歷亂發
白鳥黃鳥參差飛
忽憶去年臨海寺
正當此日弄春暉
大兄小弟無消息
獨坐空山心緒微

* The milky way.

Written at the Commencement of Spring.

To the front of yon old peaked hill, the sovereign of verdure (Spring) returns ;
At the base of yon old peaked hill the rain is gently falling :
The peach and pear blossoms successively open and blend their hues,
The white and the yellow bird fly hither and thither :
I recollect how last year, at the monastery that overlooks the sea,
On this very day I watched the spring displaying its brightness.
No tidings have since reached me of my distant brethren :
I sit solitary in this lonely mountain, and brood over my thoughts.

紫	羅	爭	五	又	已	紛	天
玉	浮	喧	色	訝	驚	紛	氣
臺	洞	爭	翩	辛	柳	萬	今
邊	口	食	翩	夷	絮	物	年
到	應	滿	雀	簇	條	各	異
亦	常	山	亂	簇	條	爭	昔
稀	見	靡	飛	鮮	長	妍	年

At the New Year. (February.)

1. The climate this season excels all seasons past ;
With gaily blended hues, all things in nature vie for beauty.
Already surprised by the early progress of the pendent willow sprigs,
I next admire the fresh luxuriance of the purple Magnolias.
2. Birds of every colour fly about in mingled confusion,
And with the noise of their contentious repasts fill my hilly dwelling :
The ravines of this *Lofow* mountain are their constant haunts,
They visit not in such numbers the lofty levels of *Tszeyu*.

與	安	總	一	紛	山	吉	村
君	得	是	時	紛	上	日	村
日	皇	清	鐘	聚	笑	都	門
日	天	齋	板	嚮	聲	從	戶
共	能	食	故	總	山	此	向
盤	雨	客	相	如	下	地	山
殮	粟	繁	喧	雷	應	來	開

3. The doors of every village are opened towards the hills,
 And crowds on this festive day flock thence hither;
 The notes of merriment on high are answered by like notes below,
 The mingled tumult of sounds is like the distant thunder.
4. Why do the bells and wooden instruments mingle their clamour?
 The crowded guests are assembled to partake of the lenten feast:
 But sovereign heaven no longer sends its showers of grain
 To replenish, worthy friends, your diurnal repasts!*

* The priests of Buddha are assembled by the ringing of bells, &c., to their entertainments of herbs, fruits, and sweetmeats, being forbidden the use of flesh and wine. Their monasteries are in the recesses of hills, wherever hills prevail, and always in the most romantic spots. The two last lines allude to the following tradition. When *Yoong-lō*, of the family called *Ming*, usurped the whole empire (A.D. 1400), one of his nephews, the proper heir, shaved his head, and assuming the habit of a priest, retired to the depths of the mountains. The living rock there opened, and poured out a constant supply of grain for the support of the royal refugee. After his death, the miracle still went on, until a covetous priest, not satisfied with the quantity of grain thus obtained, enlarged the hole or fissure in the stone through which it flowed,—when the supply immediately stopped altogether, as the proper reward of his cupidity.

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